THE MEDIEVAL DECCAN

Peasants, Social Systems and States

SIXTEENTH TO EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Hiroshi Fukazawa

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The late Hiroshi Fukazawa, an eminent Japanese scholar of medieval India, published several important articles on economy, society and politics in the Deccan. These appeared first in Japanese, and have been collected here in English translation for the first time. Together they provide a rich source of information on their subject.

Professor Fukazawa based several of his studies on documents in old Marathi and Persian; his facility with local languages makes these pieces more solidly grounded in empirical research and local writings than is common. His arguments about the various stages of social development in the medieval Deccan will be of interest to all students of feudalism and pre-modern Indian history.

HIROSHI FUKAZAWA, who died in 1986 at the age of fifty-four, was an eminent Japanese scholar of South Asian history, and Professor at the Hitotsubashi University of Tokyo.

Chuck Cleland

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SIXTEENTH TO EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

HIROSHI FUKAZAWA

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PREFACE

Hiroshi Fukazawa died of cancer on 26 August 1986 at the early age of fifty-four. As a tribute to his memory it was decided, in Japan, to publish an anthology of his writings. It was hoped that such an anthology would give readers outside Japan some idea of Fukazawa's important contributions to the study of medieval Indian society. S. Taniguchi (Professor of Economic History, Hitotsubashi University, Tokyo), H. Kotani (Tokyo Metropolitan University) and I jointly selected eight papers for this anthology. In these Fukazawa discusses Deccan society in medieval India.

Dr Taniguchi, a former student of Fukazawa, translated two of the essays from Japanese into English. The others were published originally in English. Professor Kotani, who has specialized in the same field as Fukazawa, has written an introduction to this anthology.

We hope this anthology will encourage young students of history to follow Fukazawa's sort of research on the socio-economic history of India.

NOBORU KARASHIMA
Professor of South Asian History
University of Tokyo

January 1991
New Delhi

INTRODUCTION

Hiroshi Fukazawa completed his Ph.D. in Economics at Lucknow University in 1960, under the guidance of the late Dr V. B. Singh. The theme of his Ph.D. dissertation was the historical development of the cotton industry in India, a section of which, entitled 'The Cotton Mill Industry', was published in V. B. Singh (ed.), *Economic History of India, 1857–1956* (Bombay, 1965).

While in Lucknow, Fukazawa became aware that a large number of documents pertaining to the pre-British Deccan were available in print in Marathi and Persian He also observed that many more documents existed, in manuscript form, which were yet to be researched. These documents, especially those in Marathi, are of great value because, in other regions of India, historical records of the medieval period are rarely available in the indigenous languages. For example, there are few documents in Hindi which deal with the medieval history of north India. Thus, one has to depend mostly on documents in Persian to attempt to reconstruct medieval Indian society. However, since Persian was the language of the ruling class and not of the common people, these documents do not allow a full understanding of the social and cultural life of the people. In this regard, the documents in Marathi assume an added importance, in that Marathi was the language of the people. It is to be expected, therefore, that these documents will give a more total picture of the social and cultural life of the medieval Deccan.

Fukazawa subsequently decided to extend his research into Maratha history. After having completed his Ph.D. in 1960 he went to Pune, where he studied old Marathi and Persian at the Bharat Itihas Sanshodak Mandal under the guidance of the late Dr G. H. Khare. When I met Dr Khare some fifteen years ago in Pune, he related to me precisely how hard a worker Fukazawa had been, and how he would save money to buy as many books as possible. Once he had become proficient in reading and understanding old Marathi and Persian and had collected numerous source books in these two languages, Fukazawa returned to Japan where he was appointed Professor at Hitotsubashi University, Tokyo, the university from which he had graduated.

As a teacher of Indian economy and history, Fukazawa wrote

many articles on the history of the medieval Deccan. These ranged from essays on the Adilshahi dynasty to those on the last phase of the Peshawa's rule. In 1972, he compiled several of his articles into a book entitled *Studies in the Social and Economic History of India*. These articles were written in Japanese. Some of them were translated into English and appeared in journals like the *Hitotsubashi Journal of Economics*. These articles drew the attention of Indian historians because of their unique approach and thorough documentation, and Fukazawa was invited to contribute articles to the *Cambridge Economic History of India* (1982–3).

The present anthology contains articles on various aspects of the medieval Deccan taken from the book *Studies in the Social and Economic History of India*. Six of these (articles 1 and 4–8) were translated by Fukazawa himself, and two (articles 2 and 3) by Dr S Taniguchi, a former student of Fukazawa and now a Professor at Hitotsubashi University.

Characteristics of Fukazawa's Approach

Fukazawa himself defined his approach as 'socio-economic rather than purely economic'. This socio-economic approach attaches greater importance to 'movements of men and formation of communities in relation to movements of goods and money, than to movements of goods and money themselves' (H. Fukazawa, 'Debtors and Creditors in the Deccan Riot 1875', *Ajia Keizai*, Institute of Developing Economies, vol. 17, no. 4, April 1976).

The socio-economic approach has been one of the main trends of historical studies in post-war Japan. The economy is, no doubt, the base of every social structure. All human activities, cultural, social and political, have their basis in the economy, but, at the same time, the economy itself is a result of human activity in all fields. Mentality, or the mental activity of human beings, is closely related to the economy. In other words, the economy of a particular stage of development of society is the basis of the prevailing mentality. In turn, the mentality of a society is a reflection of the relationships between man and that society. Thus, the economy is in close correlation with the characteristics of social relationships in a given society. The socio-economic approach pays due regard to this aspect. This approach may be called a synthesis of the historical materialism of Karl Marx and the sociology of Max Weber.

Fukazawa was very cautious about relying completely on any particular theory, whether Marx's or Weber's. He did accept many of

Weber's concepts and was especially influenced by Weber's religious sociology; in fact, in 1983 he translated into Japanese 'Hinduismus and Buddhiusmus' from Weber's *Die Wirtschaftsethik der Weltreligionen*. Yet he did not completely adopt Weber's theory, nor did he approach his work with any readymade theories or models in mind. Fundamentally, his approach was marked by its empiricism. He collected as much material as possible, using this material to reconstruct the social and cultural life of the medieval Deccan.

Deshmukh and Local Society

In various parts of this anthology, especially in the first article, Fukazawa discusses the functions and rights of local hereditary officers, the most eminent among whom was the *deshmukh* (or the *desai*). His points are as follows: (1) The prototype of the *deshmukh* existed even before the commencement of Muslim rule in the Deccan. It can be traced back to the Rastrakuta period. (2) The local administrative divisions, such as *parganah*, *samt* or *tappa*, were originally local units over which the *deshmukh* had control. (3) The *deshmukh*'s office and rights were considered as *vatan* or *miras*, which meant hereditary property or patrimony. (4) The *deshmukh* tended to become the feudal lord when the central power declined and when state control over him slackened.

These points are vital for an understanding of the historical process, i.e, the various stages of development of society in the medieval Deccan. Whether the concept of feudalism is applicable to Indian society is a question which has been much discussed recently. Fukazawa saw a tendency towards feudalization in the development of the *deshmukh*. It may be called feudalization from below, in contrast with the tendency of fief-holders (*mokasai* or *mokasadar*) to become feudal lords, which may be called feudalization from above. Fukazawa stressed the importance of feudalization from below for it was this process which helped in the formation and development of Maratha power.

As Fukazawa saw it, the process of feudalization which took place in the medieval Deccan could be observed in other regions of India as well. However, it must be borne in mind that the feudalization process in the Indian context had certain peculiar features which are not to be found in European history. More research needs to be done in this area as it relates to the medieval Deccan. In this regard, some points should be considered.

The *deshmukh* was the head of the local community called *got* in Marathi, equivalent to *parganah*. He was also the local hereditary

officer of the state. Both these functions of the *deshmukh*, however, were so closely interwoven that it was difficult to separate one from the other. Within the local community, many disputes arose concerning various issues such as hereditary rights, known as *vatan*, or *miras* (for example, the *deshmukhi vatan* and the *patelki vatan*, which were the hereditary rights of the village headman), or on the question of boundaries between villages, or relationships between various caste communities. In such cases the *deshmukh*, as the head of the local community, would summon and preside over a meeting of the local community, the *got sabha*. But it often happened that the complainant in a particular dispute would not bring his case to the *deshmukh* straightaway. He would first go to the government (*huzur*) or the district office (such as the *thana*). Then the government or district officer would refer the case to the *deshmukh* of the *parganah* where the dispute originated, to be settled by the meeting of the local community. In this way, the *deshmukh* functioned both as the head of the local community and as the hereditary district officer.

The *deshmukh's* position as an intermediary between the state and the local community was very clearly seen at the time of tax settlement. He helped the village head (*patel*) to negotiate and settle with the government officer the amount of tax to be paid by the village as a whole. In times of calamity, as for example during a period of drought, blight or war, the *deshmukh*, as the representative of the local community, would ask the government to reduce the tax payable by the village for that particular year.

In his capacity as mediator, the *deshmukh* received emoluments from both parties. From the government he received *inam* in the form of tax-free land, and from the local community he received certain privileges and perquisites which were originally given in kind but which, later, became money payments. And, over the course of time, as the *deshmukh* gradually usurped the rights and powers of the government and of the local community, his role was transformed from that of the representative of the local community to that of the ruler. Thus a new class relationship emerged between the *deshmukh* and the members of the local community. Although the *deshmukh* did not cease being the head of the local comunity, he now acquired the character of a local ruler as well. This new class relationship might be called feudal.

Relation between State and Society

In the three articles which comprise the second part of this anthology,

Fukazawa looks at various aspects of the relationship between state and society. He examines the caste system as well as the system of slavery and forced labour as carried out by the state. He makes a critical analysis of the traditional image of the medieval Indian state, in which the relation between ruler and ruled was seen principally in terms of the appropriation of a substantial portion of the products of the ruled as tax payment in kind or in money. Apart from this, both parties (ruler and ruled) lived completely isolated from each other. Fukazawa attempts to show that the role of the state in the Deccan during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was to maintain public order by means of state control over the caste system and the system of slavery; but no less important were the financial considerations of the state, as was indicated by its system of forced labour (*veth*, *begar*). This is an important point in light of the European-derived theory of the so-called 'Asiatic state' or 'Asiatic despotism', the relevance of which Fukazawa examines.

The state has always been the instrument of the ruling classes for the exploitation of the ruled (the direct producers). At the same time, there has been no state in history which has not performed public functions through which the ruled would have derived some benefits. That the medieval states in India were no exception to this rule was the point Fukazawa sought to make.

In this regard, the caste system as the system for defining status within medieval Indian society is of much interest. As Fukazawa shows, the caste system was not only the non-official, autonomous social order among the people, it was also public order controlled and maintained by state power. Herein lies the peculiarity of the caste system as a status system. Status systems in history were generally elaborated and maintained by state power, the state seeking to do this by means of laws, judicial organizations, police and military power. Every society throughout its history has its own system of social ranks and social norms, which is made use of by the state as the base of the status system. In other words, the status system is the system of indigenous social ranking and norms, established as the state apparatus and imposed on the ruled by the state. This is the general character of status systems in history. The caste system, however, deviated from this in some aspects.

Fukazawa shows that the state in the medieval Deccan did not assume sole responsibility, through its judicial organs, for punishing even criminal offences such as murder. Those accused of such offences were usually ordered to appear before a meeting of the local community

(*got sabha*) and, if proven guilty, were excommunicated. This means that the state depended on the caste system (originally an indigenous social order of the community) for the maintenance of public order, and the state itself imposed as punishment caste norms like excommunication on criminals. Further, if any dispute regarding caste ranking arose, the state intervened and regulated such ranking among the disputing caste communities. Since it depended on the caste system for the maintenance of public order, the state could not afford to leave unresolved any dispute on caste ranking, for it would have endangered public order. This reciprocal relationship between the state and society (the caste system) is one of the most important points which Fukazawa discusses in this anthology.

Another interesting question which Fukazawa addresses (in the fourth article) is the phenomenon of 'Sanskritization', although he himself does not use this term. The concept of Sanskritization, put forward by M. N. Srinivas, needs to be more thoroughly researched. Fukazawa shows that the Prabhus continually tried to imitate the social habits of the Brahmans to the extent of performing rituals that only Brahmans were allowed to practise. The state, however, intervened and prohibited the Prabhus from doing this and from adopting the professions of the Brahmans. Fukazawa went on to suggest that, under colonial rule, the caste system, which was now deprived of state support, underwent certain changes and the Prabhus began to be free to engage in many of the social customs of the Brahmans. This view should encourage further research into the concept of Sanskritization and the change in the caste system under British rule.

Village Community and Peasant Land Right

The Indian village community has been the subject of much discussion. Many British observers viewed this community as a small 'republic', a self-sufficient co-operative body which had little connection with the outside world. Political power changed hands frequently, but the village community remained unchanged. This image of the village community in India is repeated in many books written by European thinkers, including Marx and Weber. Whether or not this is an authentic picture remains to be seen through the study of historical documents left by the people themselves.

Fukazawa sought to examine this question by looking at Marathi documents of the eighteenth century. His findings were as follows: (1) There were two types of cultivators in the village community—the *mirasdar* (*vatandar* or *thalkari*, *thalvaik*) who had fairly well

established proprietary rights over the land he cultivated; and the *upari* (outsider), a tenant who rented land for cultivation either from the state, the *inamdars* or the village body, mostly on the basis of *batai* (a fifty-fifty sharing of the products).

(2) In the village there were various types of artisans and servants commonly called *bara balute* (twelve kinds of *balute* servants). Within the *bara balute* were included *sutar* (carpenter), *lohar* (blacksmith), *kumbhar* (potter), *navi* (barber), etc. They were supported by the village as a whole, either through cash payment or by the village providing tax-free land. Each of these servants had his own *vatan* or *miras*, as for example, *sutarki vatan* in the case of the *sutar*. His *vatan* was a well-established hereditary right (patrimony) of which he could not be deprived. Artisans or servants who happened to stay in a village and perform such jobs as carpentry were called *upari sutar*. *Upari* artisans and servants were also supported by the village as a whole but they did not have any *vatan* rights.

From Fukazawa's work we get a fairly clear picture of the village community of the eighteenth-century Deccan. However, as the main aim of his study was to reconstruct the social structure of the village community, his approach was somewhat static. As a result, it is to be feared that his studies might be used to support the idea of the Indian village community as having a static or stagnant character. Although this question was not sufficiently discussed by Fukazawa, he did mention the term *bara balute*, which may not be found in eighteenth-century documents but which was supposed to indicate commodity producers or sellers like *teli* (oilman), *tamboli* (paan dealer) and *mali* (vegetable and flower-seller) who settled in the village. If Fukazawa had had more time to study these particular members of the village, he might have been able to give a clearer picture of the dynamics at work within the village community, namely the historical changes taking place as reflected in the development of commodity economy. This development was closely related with the feudalization process mentioned above. The relationship between these two processes needs to be more thoroughly examined if one is to arrive at a better understanding of Indian history.

The question of landed property was also a subject of much debate. It was necessary for the British to know who the proprietor of land was since he would be made responsible for paying land tax according to the tax theory of political economy. Many 'theories', such as state landownership, joint tenure by the village or private ownership of landed property by peasants, were put forward. None of them was

sufficiently supported by historical sources. Fukazawa, however, as mentioned earlier, showed that the *mirasdar* (*vatadar*) *kunbi* had a well-established proprietary right over the land he cultivated. This was a very important finding.

In support of this position, Fukazawa quoted a very important document (*vatan patra*), according to which a plot of land was sold by a *mirasdar kunbi* to an *upari*. This document adequately proves the existence of peasant land-proprietorship in the medieval Deccan. It also reveals some other equally interesting facts. First, the land sold was indicated by two different types of denominations, namely 7 *bigha* land and 3 *ruka* land. A *bigha* is a unit of land area (square measure). What was a *ruka*? Fukazawa interpreted a *ruka* as another unit of land area, but it cannot be so. In my article 'The *Vatan* System in the 16th-18th century Deccan' (*Acta Asiatica*, no. 48, Toho Gakkai, 1985), I indicated that a *ruka* means the proportion of village taxes (taxes were levied on the village as a whole) for which each peasant was held responsible. We can thus get a picture of the communal structure of the medieval Deccan village through an analysis of the term *ruka*. Second, the *vatan-patra* seems to be the only document in print which shows sale of land by a peasant (*mirasdar kunbi*). There may be other documents (not in print) of the same character, but it seems that the sale of land was not very common in the medieval Deccan. The peasant had a right to sell his land, as shown by Fukazawa, but actually he seldom sold it. This is an important point which should be closely examined, for it seems to reflect a peculiar feature of the relationship between man and land in the medieval Deccan.

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February 1988

CHAPTER 1: THE LOCAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE ADILSHAHI SULTANATE (1489–1686)*

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Preliminary Remarks

The Adilshahi Sultanate was established in 1489 by Yusuf Adil Khan with Bijapur as its capital. It was one of the five Sultanates of the Deccan which sprang up after the dissolution of the Bahmani Sultanate. Until 1686, when it was annexed to the mighty Mughal Empire, it had eight Sultans on its throne, was the most extensive and powerful of the five Deccan Sultanates, and played an important part in the political and cultural history of medieval India.[1]

The purpose of this article is, however, not to discuss the

* Although the entire responsibility for the contents of this article is solely mine, I am nevertheless greatly indebted to the guidance and instruction given by Professor G. H. Khare of Bharat Itihas Sanshodhak Mandal, Poona, and I wish to express my most sincere gratitude to him.

Moreover, an American scholar on Japanese literature, at present working in Tokyo, has kindly read through the typewritten draft of this article and improved it linguistically to a great extent. I wish to offer my hearty thanks to him.

This article first appeared under the title of 'A Study of the Local Administration of Adilshahi Sultanate (AD 1489–1686)' in *Hitotsubashi Journal of Economics* (hereafter *HJE*), vol. 3, no. 2, 1963. A slightly modified Japanese version appeared in *Studies in Economics* (hereafter *SE*), vol. 8, 1964, and was also reproduced as chapter 1 of my Japanese book *Studies in the Social and Economic History of India*, Tokyo, 1972 (hereafter *SSEHI*).

politico-cultural history of this Sultanate, but to analyse the institutions of local administration in its established territory, roughly from the Bhima to the Tungabhadra. Two broad questions have led me to study the subject.

First, the studies hitherto attempted on the medieval Deccan during the Muslim period appear to be mainly confined either to the chronological narration of political events or to the cultural history of the court.[2] This trend of research may be said to be due to two causes: (1) the source materials so far used have been mostly the court chronicles written by the court literati and similar scholars;[3] and (2) the modern historians of India have been chiefly concerned with the political vicissitudes of the various dynasties. These fields of study are important and should be encouraged. But there is another problem of basic importance regarding the structure of the State in medieval India. That is, when the foreign Muslims settled in the Deccan as conquerors, how and through what institutions did they rule over the indigenous Hindus? This is the first question that has led me to the present study. I have chosen the Adilshahi Sultanate because, apart from another reason to be mentioned below, a comparatively large number of contemporary records pertaining to the administrative institutions of this Sultanate are available.

The second broad question may be stated as follows. About the middle of the seventeenth century, Hindu political power revived in the Deccan. This revival, the rise of the Maratha power, began on the northwest frontier of the Adilshahi Sultanate and developed, very rapidly, into a solid kingdom. To account for this rapid rise of the Marathas it may be assumed that certain institutional background must have been prepared during the Adilshahi period, that combined with the often described favourable political circumstances, the awakening of Hindu religious consciousness, and the extraordinary military genius of Shivaji.[4] Therefore, before we try to re-construct a picture of the rise of the Marathas, is it not necessary to have a preliminary knowledge of the administrative institutions of the Adilshahi Sultanate in general? This has been the second question for my present study.

The procedure followed in this article is to analyse the relation-

ship of the local administrative staffs with the central power on the one hand and with the people on the other, and more particularly to analyse the administrative functions and the methods of remuneration of the local administrative staffs.

When we approach our subject from this point of view, we recognize two basically different categories of administrative staffs in this Sultanate. One is the Hindu indigenous hereditary officers, often collectively called *deshak*, whose prototype can probably be traced to the ancient period before the Muslim conquest. The hereditary officers included the *desai* (or *deshmukh*), the chief of a *pargana* (or its minor division) containing roughly 10 to 200 villages; the *deshkulkarni* (or *deshpande*), the accountant and record-keeper of a *pargana* (or its minor division); the *patil* (or *muqaddam*), the head of a village; the *kulkarni*, the accountant and record-keeper of a village; the *sete*, the head of a market-place; the *mahajan*, the accountant and record-keeper of a market-place; and the *naikwadi*, the guards of a fortress. In addition, there was often a *chaugla*, the assistant head of a village; and a *chaudhuri*, the assistant head of a market-place.

Another category of the administrative staffs were the 'Sultan's bureaucrats', whom we shall call, in this article, crown bureaucrats or simply bureaucrats. There were two methods of local administration as carried out by the bureaucrats, and these corresponded roughly to two kinds of administrative division of the Sultanate. One method was to mark off the important regions of the territory into centrally administered crown districts called *muamala* or *qalah* and appoint a crown bureaucrat, called the *havaldar* (manager), and his subordinates in each district. The other method was to assign certain areas to high-class and middle-class bureaucrats as their 'fiefs' (usually called *muqasa*) and make each of them administer the assigned area. Such fiefs were usually created in the areas called *parganas*.

A few words of explanation, however, are necessary regarding the administration of the *parganas*, because not all *parganas* were assigned to the bureaucrats. The administration of the *parganas* was not carried out uniformly but in at least three different ways.

The first way was to assign one or more *parganas* to a high-class bureaucrat as his fief and put it (or them) under his sole management. The second way was to divide a part of a *pargana* into small fiefs, each composed of one or more villages, assign them to middle-class bureaucrats, and attach the rest of the *pargana* to the central Court. In this case the *desai* (or the *deshmukh*) of the *pargana* was made responsible for administering the attached part of the *pargana*. The third way was to attach the whole of a *pargana* to the central government and put it under the administrative responsibility of a *desai*, while a special bureaucrat was occasionally sent to check his administration. These different methods will be referred to again later. In any case, it should be borne in mind that the administration of *parganas* through assignment of fiefs was carried out by means of the first and second of these three administrative methods.

However, it must be pointed out that not all fiefs were confined to *pargana* regions. Even a part of a crown district (*muamala* or *qalah*) was often separated from the District and assigned to a middle-class bureaucrat as his fief. Yet the portion of the *muamala* or *qalah* which was assigned in this way seems to have been only a small part of it, and a whole *muamala* or *qalah* was rarely given away as a fief. In short, small fiefs were given not only in *parganas* but also in crown districts, whereas large fiefs were usually assigned in *pargana* regions.

Briefly we may say that local administration by means of bureaucrats was either carried out by the *havaldar* and his subordinates in the crown districts or by the fief-holding bureaucrats in their respective fiefs.

On the basis of this preliminary discussion, we are led to divide our analysis into four topics. The first is to ascertain the geographical distribution of such administrative divisions as the *pargana*, the *muamala* and the *qalah*, and to discover their respective administrative purposes. The second is to examine the functions and means of remuneration of the ubiquitous hereditary officers, especially of the *desais* and *deshpandes*, who held the highest power and responsibility among the hereditary officers. The third is to analyse the functions and means

of remuneration of the *havaldar* directly appointed by the Sultan, and to find out his relationship with his subordinates on the one hand and with the hereditary officers in his District on the other. And the fourth is to classify the kinds of fiefs assigned to the bureaucrats, and to examine the method of their management and the extent of their 'overlordship'.

2. *Materials*

The materials available for our study are nearly 360 official documents of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries published by Bharat Itihas Sanshodhak Mandal of Poona, and these can be classified as follows: (1) About 260 Adilshahi *farmans* (royal decrees) selected and edited by Professor G. H. Khare.[5] (2) About 40 *khurdkhat*, or orders issued by *havaldars* and *muqasais* (fief-holders). (3) 5 *misali* or letters issued by middle-class bureaucrats such as the *thanedar* (chief of police). (4) About 25 *kaulnama*, or assurance letters issued by the Sultan, *havaldar*, *muqasai*, *thanedar*, *desai* and so on. (5) About 15 *mahazar*, or decisions issued by the justice assemblies. And (6) about 15 other miscellaneous records. Of these various documents, the royal decrees (1) were written in Persian, whereas the others are in the Marathi language.[6]

The relative paucity of the records, and the unevenness of their regional and chronological distribution pose certain difficulties. First, the regional distribution: the records do not cover the whole of the established territory of the Sultanate. The areas left blank in the map below (see p. 9) do not appear in the available records. Moreover, the density of distribution is very uneven. The regions along the Krishna River, and those around Bankapur, Mudgal, and Sholapur have more density than others. Though admitting the possibility that certain institutions may have been highly developed in those areas best represented in the records and that there may have been different institutions in other areas which do not appear in the sources, we had to generalize our observations to a great extent. Second, the chronological distribution of the records is also very uneven. No record

has been found for the period extending from the establishment of the Sultanate to the middle of the sixteenth century. Even for the latter half of the sixteenth century only 17 farmans and 7 other records are found in our sources, and the rest of the records are all of the seventeenth century. This means that we cannot have any exact idea of the institutions in the formative period of the Sultanate, which is quite important for a study like the present one. It must therefore be noted that the institutions to be examined in this article are mainly of the seventeenth century and that conditions in the formative period can be suggested only occasionally.

Furthermore, very little work has been done so far[7] on the institutional aspect of the Sultanate. This article does not claim to be more than a tentative study.

II. ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS OF THE SULTANATE

The administrative divisions of the Sultanate were: the *parganas*; the minor divisions often found inside or outside a *pargana*; and the *muamala* and *qalah*.

1. *The* Parganas

Pargana is a Persian term which means 'region' or 'district'. It was introduced into India by the Muslim rulers and was widely used both in north India and the Deccan, being usually prefixed to the most important town of the region, e.g. *pargana* Poona and *pargana* Wai. It is said that this term was introduced into the Deccan during the Tughluq period, viz. the first half of the fourteenth century.[8] But it is not yet clear how these *Pargana* divisions were created. Several significant facts derived from Adilshahi records may be pointed out.

The first fact is the great variety in the size of the *parganas*. A *pargana* contained from 50 to 200 villages.[9] This suggests that even if the Tughluq rulers introduced the *pargana* divisions for the first time they did so not on a certain new principle (e.g. standard amount of land revenue), but by renaming the indi-

genous local divisions which they found already in existence. This hypothesis is supported by two other facts. One is the existence of the divisional term *tappa*, which was commonly used in the Hindi, Marathi, Kanarese, Telugu and Gujarati languages with only some slight difference of meaning.[10] It has been suggested that this term was an indigenous divisional term used by the Hindus. Therefore, a significant fact for our purposes is that the Adilshahi records show that *tappa* was often used as a synonym for *pargana*. For example, three *tappas* shown in a *farman* are renamed as three *parganas* in another *farman* issued three days later.[11] K. V. Purandare also says that *tappa* was a synonym for *pargana*.[12] On the other hand, in the Maval and Salsette regions where the Muslim influence penetrated in a later period and more slowly than in the other areas of the Deccan, *tappa* was more commonly used than *pargana*.[13] It is not clear however how old the divisional term *tappa* was. When a supposedly indigenous term is used as synonym for a foreign one, it is reasonable to assume that the former is older. Thus we may assume that the Muslim conquerors renamed as *parganas* the existing divisions called *tappas*, and that in certain localities the older term was not totally replaced by the new one but remained an official divisional term. However, sometimes the two terms were not used synonymously—in such cases *pargana* was used to designate an area larger than *tappa* (e.g. *tappa* Musekhore of *pargana* Poona).[14] Several *tappas* were sometimes amalgamated into a *pargana*.

The second fact to be noted is that each of the *parganas* had a *desai*ship whose prototype is said to have existed in the pre-Muslim Hindu period, as will be pointed out later on. And K. V. Purandare says that the size of a *pargana* depended on the size of the territory ruled over by a *desai* (or a *deshmukh*).[15] Accordingly, we may assume that the Muslim conquerors converted the *tappa* area controlled by the prototype of the *desai* into a *pargana*.

On the other hand, there were several *desais* in many of the *parganas*. Such cases may be explained by postulating that the *desai*ship was later on divided among the family members of the

original holder or partially transferred to others with the result that several *desais* might come into being in a single *pargana*. At any rate, although the total number of *parganas* that existed in the Sultanate cannot be ascertained, at least 30 *parganas*, as shown on the attached map have been found in the records.

2. *Minor Divisions inside and outside the* Pargana

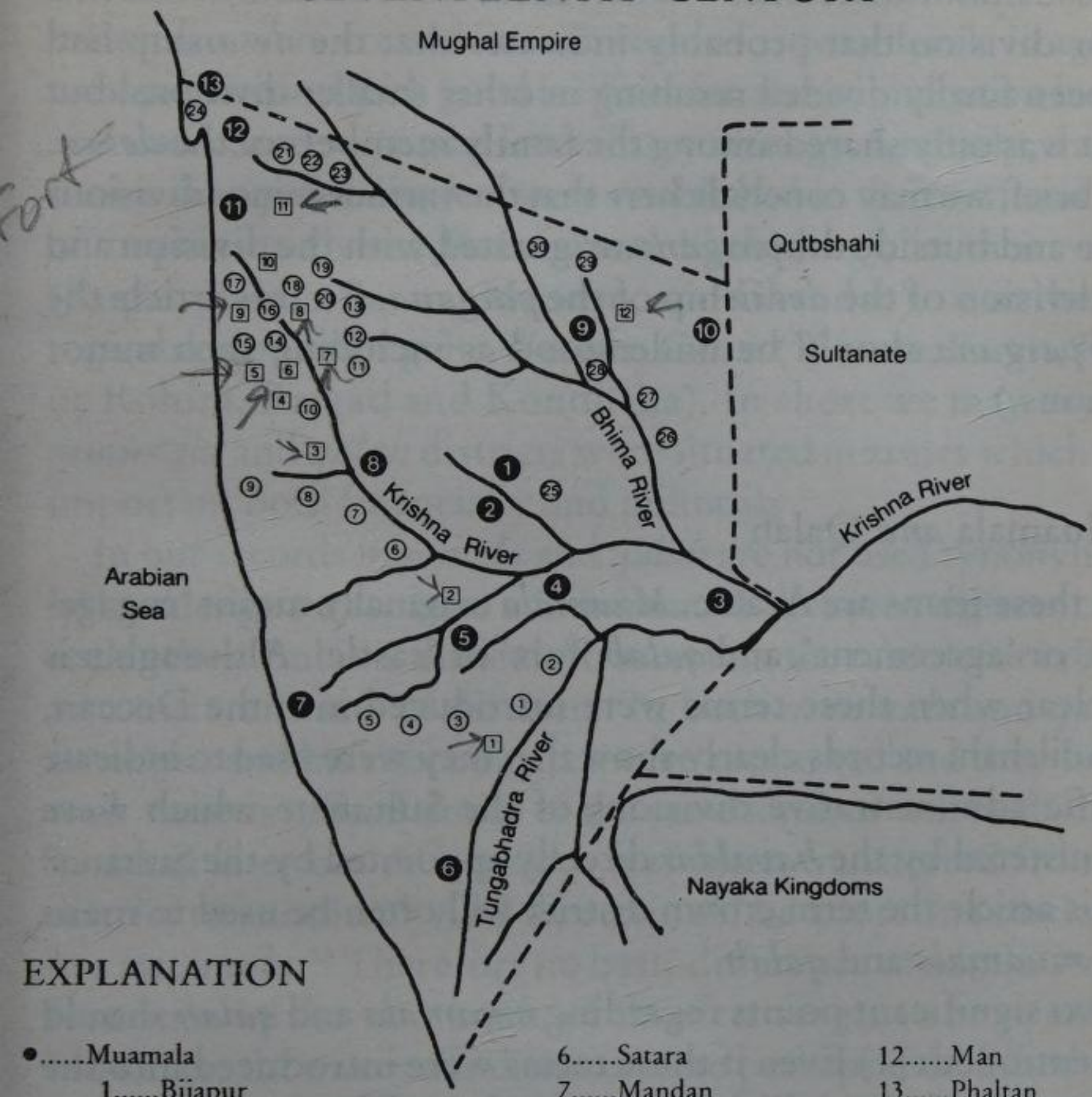
There were often minor divisions which were either included in and attached to a *pargana* or were separate units outside of and independent of it. They were called *samt*, *qaryat*, or *tarf*. These terms are all of Arabic origin and were introduced into the Deccan by the Muslims. Purandare observes that *tarf* was used in the Poona area, *samt* in the Satara area, and *qaryat* in the Deccan as a whole.[16] There is hardly any doubt that, as he says, the term *tarf*, though found in other regions too,[17] was mainly used in the Poona-Bhor areas. But contrary to what he asserts, *samt* is found not only in Satara but also widely in other areas,[18] and *qaryat* was used only in the Man-Karhad-Kolhapur areas.

Now when we focus our attention on the cases where both *samt* and *qaryat* were used in the same locality, we notice two facts. First, in some cases the two terms had no clear difference in meaning but were used alternately;[19] division of the *samt*, and in the same locality there was often another division called *hisar* between the *samt* and *qaryat*.[20]

In any case, these minor divisions were not equal in size. For example, there were fifty-one villages in a *samt* of *qalah* Shahdurg in 1627,[21] whereas at about the same time only ten villages were contained in the *qaryat* Saswad[22] to the southeast of Poona.

The irregularity of their size indicates that these minor divisions were created not on any uniform basis but on the basis of some indigenous circumstances. It is probably right as Purandare explains that these minor divisions sprang up from the division of the *desai*ship of the *pargana* among the *desai's* family-members or its partial transfer to others and that sometimes the central government cut off a part of a *pargana*, making a new minor

MAP SHOWING THE ADILSHAHI SULTANATE PROPER ABOUT THE MIDDLE OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY



EXPLANATION

•.....Muamala
1.....Bijapur
2.....Muhammadpur
3.....Raichur
4.....Mudgal
5.....Torgal
6.....Bankapur
7.....Goa
8.....Miraj (Murtazabad)
9.....Sandalapur (Sholapur)
10.....Bidar
11.....Chaul (Padshabad)
12.....Kalyan (Muranjan)
13.....Bivandi (Islamabad)

□.....Qalah
1.....Kopal
2.....Badami (Sikandayadad)
3.....Panala
4.....Wasota
5.....Parari
6.....Satara
7.....Mandan
8.....Chandan
9.....Rohira (Raher)
10.....Rajgad
11.....Kondhana
12.....Shahdurg (Naldurg)

○.....Pargana
1.....Kanakgiri
2.....Gangawati
3.....Gadag
4.....Hubuli
5.....Lakshmeshvar
6.....Mudhol
7.....Kagal
8.....Kolhapur
9.....Ranja
10.....Karhad
11.....Khatav
12.....Man
13.....Phaltan
14.....Medh
15.....Utrauli
16.....Bhor
17.....Birwadi
18.....Kudal
19.....Sirwar
20.....Wai
21.....Poona
22.....Supa
23.....Indapur
24.....Salsette
25.....Almala (Sindagi)
26.....Ganjuti
27.....Aland
28.....Mahidari (Akalkot)
29.....Donki (Osmanabad)
30.....Pangri (Balsi)

division, and appointed a new *desai* (or a *deshmukh*) for it as a royal favour.[23] And in fact we find one or several *desais* in each of these minor divisions.[24] When there were several *desais* in a minor division that probably indicates that the *desai*ship had not been finally divided resulting in other smaller divisions, but that it was only shared among the family members of the *desai*.

In brief, we may conclude here that the various minor divisions inside and outside the *pargana* originated with the division and sub-division of the *desai*ship of the *pargana*. (In this article the term *pargana* should be understood as including such minor divisions.)

3. Muamala *and* Qalah

Both these terms are Arabic. *Muamala* originally meant 'engagement' or 'agreement', and *qalah* 'fort' or 'castle'. Although it is not clear when these terms were introduced into the Deccan, the Adilshahi records clearly show that they were used to indicate specific administrative divisions of the Sultanate which were administered by the *havaldar* directly appointed by the Sultan.[25] In this article the term crown district will often be used to mean both *muamala* and *qalah*.

Two significant points regarding *muamala* and *qalah* should be mentioned: (1) Even if these terms were introduced into the Deccan before the Adilshahi period, the Adilshahi Sultans also created new crown districts (e.g. *qalah* Shahadurg about 1560[26] and *qalah* Satara in 1540).[27] And (2) although there were small crown districts which comprised only forty villages or so (e.g. *qalah* Satara),[28] it appears that the crown district usually covered the area of a comparatively large *pargana*, or often even a much larger area than that, because many districts included two to six minor divisions (*samt* and *qaryat*),[29] and *qalah* Shahadurg covered the area of seven *parganas* and one *qaryat*.[30]

What kind of areas, then, were marked off as crown districts? The attached map shows that *muamalas* were established in the regions of confluence of important rivers (e.g. Sandalapur, Raichur, Torgal and Bankapur), in the valleys (e.g. Mudgal and

Miraj), in port areas (e.g. Goa and Chaul), and in important traffic centres (Kalyan and Bivandi); they would be scattered along the frontiers rather than in the inner territories. In other words, *muamalas* were created in such regions as were fertile in agricultural production with good facilities for water, important in trade and traffic, and were vital for military strategy. Similarly, the map shows that *qalah* districts were established in the confluent areas of important rivers (Badami and Shahadurg), in their valleys (Kopal, Panala, Satara, Mandan, and Chandan), or in the strategical regions along the Western Ghats (Wasota, Parari, Raher or Rohira, Rajgad and Kondhana). In short we may say that *muamala* and *qalah* districts were situated in zones which were important both financially and militarily.

In our records *muamala* and *qalah* are not used synonymously but designate separate administrative divisions different from each other. But it is difficult to ascertain the reason for creating two different sets of districts. In both *muamala* and *qalah* a *havaldar* and his subordinates were appointed and they undertook various official duties of the same kind, as will be discussed in detail later on. A *havaldar* was often transferred from one district to another.[31] And there would be a fort or a castle even in a *muamala*.[32] Therefore no basic difference of administrative functions in the two kinds of districts seems to have existed. However, the *muamala* districts were perhaps established more for financial than for military purposes, whereas the reverse was the case with *qalah* districts. Not only the terms themselves suggest such a difference, we know that, as pointed out above, one of the locations of the *muamala* was the centres of trade and traffic, while that of *qalah* was strategic points along the Western Ghats, and that, although a considerable portion of revenue derived in the *qalah* districts was often reserved for maintenance or repairing of the fort,[33] the same is not true of the *muamala* districts.

III. HEREDITARY OFFICERS—ESPECIALLY *DESAI* (OR *DESHMUKH*) AND *DESHKULKARNI* (OR *DESHPANDE*)

1. Hereditary Officers in General

Of such terms as *desai* (or *deshmukh*),[34] *deshkulkarni* (or *deshpande*), *patil* (or *muqaddam*), *kulkarni*, *sete*, *mahajan*, and so on, only *muqaddam* is of Arabic origin, the others are all indigenous Hindu expressions. This suggests that at least the prototype of these hereditary officers had existed before the Muslim invasion. Indeed, *patil*, *kulkarni*, *sete* and *mahajan* have been found on some copper-plates of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries discovered in southwestern Maharashtra, although what their function was at that time is not very clear.[35] On the other hand, we cannot trace *desai* (or *deshmukh*) and *deshkulkarni* (or *deshpande*) to the pre-Muslim Hindu period. To the best of my knowledge, the earliest documentary evidence of these terms goes back only to 1395, that is, five decades after the establishment of Bahmani Sultanate.[36] Nevertheless, according to Professor A. S. Altekar, the prototype of the *deshmukh* and *deshpande* also existed in the Rashtrakuta period of the eighth to eleventh centuries, although different terms were used.[37]

While the exact functions and methods of remuneration of the prototypes of the hereditary officers during the Hindu period, if they then existed, are not clear, the duties and methods of remuneration of the hereditary officers during the Muslim period, particularly during the Adilshahi period, were clearly conceived as *miras* or *watan*; and the remuneration alone was usually called *inam*. The word *inam* meant something like 'perpetual gift'. These three terms are all of Arabic origin. This fact indicates that the Muslim rulers of the Deccan, on finding the prototypes of the hereditary officers, adopted them, and defined their functions and fixed the means of their remuneration in terms of Muslim concepts so that they could be utilized as indigenous local agents of the Muslim ruling power.

During the Adilshahi period, the office and remuneration of each hereditary officer, from *desai* to *mahajan*, were confirmed and assured by the royal favour directly or at least ultimately,

and this was true not only with regard the crown districts but also with regard to the fiefs of the bureaucrats. Here it ultimately means that, while a fief-holder was empowered to increase the remuneration of hereditary officers or appoint new ones in the vacant posts in his fief,[38] in order to get the Sultan's approval and confirmation of these benefits conferred,[39] the fief-holder as well as the hereditary officers had to be loyal to the Sultan.[40] Moreover, the Sultan himself sometimes conferred these benefits directly even in the fiefs held by the bureaucrats;[41] also a hereditary officer could appeal directly to the Sultan for restoring such of his rights as may have been infringed by the local bureaucrat, and the Sultan would often restore and protect such rights.[42] In short, hereditary officers were basically the servants not of the local bureaucrats but of the Sultan himself.

The office and remuneration of the hereditary officers were hereditary nominally as well as actually, for many *farmans* and *kaulnamas* confirmed or re-confirmed them by such words as 'after him, to his son and grandson' (*bad o ba-aulad va ahlad-i-o*), 'eternally' (*abadi*), 'until the last day of the age' (*ta ila yaum-uz-zaman*), 'until Doomsday' (*ta yaum-ul-qiyam*), and 'from generation to generation' (*vanshparanparenen*).[43]

The duties of the hereditary officers in general towards the Sultan were to hold to a sort of loyal sentiment variously called 'loyalty' (*halal-khwari*), 'devotion of life' (*janfishani*), 'good wishes for the royal prosperity' (*daulat-khwahi*), and 'faithfulness to the salt' (*namak-halali*), to pay into royal treasury a certain amount of tribute (*peshkash, nazarana, sherni*) and a tax on their *inam* (*inam-patti*) assessed at a much lower rate than the ordinary tax, and to perform the various official duties that will be discussed later in connection with the *desais* and *deshkulkarnis*.

As mentioned above, the office including its remuneration was called *miras*, which meant originally 'inheritance' or 'patrimony'. And in fact *miras* could be divided, sold or transferred by its holder. But its division, sale or transfer was restricted in two ways: it had to be sanctioned by the Government and confirmed by the local society.[44] These restrictions seem to have produced

an important result: the hereditary offices were generally monopolized by a high castes of Hindus such as Brahmans, Marathas, Prabhus and Lingayats. A very few of the hereditary officers were Muslims and even they were most probably native converts rather than foreigners.[45]

2. *The Desai* (Deshmukh) *and the Sultan*

In this section the basic relationship between the *desais* and the Adilshahi Sultans is discussed in some detail.

When the Sultan confirmed or re-confirmed the office and remuneration of a *desai* through the 'favour and unlimited grace of the Sultan' (*marahim-i-padshahana va fart-i-avatif-i-khusrvana*), the Sultan gave notice of the decision to the local bureaucrats or fief-holders, other hereditary officers, and the ordinary people of the region, and ordered them not to disturb the *desai* in the performance of his office and the enjoyment of his remuneration.

What the *desai* was commanded to do by the Sultan for this 'royal favour' was: (1) to perform the official tasks to be discussed later on; (2) to remain loyal to the Sultan; (3) to pay the fixed annual tribute to the royal treasury;[46] (4) to designate a person who would stand as guarantor for the *desai's* good conduct and loyalty (such a person being called *zaman*);[47] and (5) to pay the *inam-patti* either to the royal treasury through the *havaldar* of the place or to the fief-holder in case the *pargana* was assigned in fief.[48] Moreover, the *desai* of a crown district was ordered by the Sultan to obey the commands and rule of the *havaldar* (*dar zabt va raft-i-havaldar budan*),[49] and the *desai* of a *pargana* assigned to a bureaucrat was also ordered by the Sultan to 'obey him (the fief-holder)' (*dar mutabaat-i-ishan budan*).[50]

The Sultan ensured the loyalty of the *desai* and supervised his services not only by means of the bureaucrats in the crown district, or the fief-holders and their agents in the assigned *pargana*, but also by means of the supervisor (here called *mahaldar*), specially sent by the central government in the case of a *pargana* temporarily attached to the central Court and put under

the administrative responsibility of the local *desai*.[51]

When the Sultan discovered through such means any negligence or irregularity committed by the *desai*, he would send him a *farman*, ordering him to perform strictly his duties or to stop the irregularity immediately and threatening him that his office and remuneration would be given to another person if the same thing occurred again in future.[52]

If the *desai* was guilty of disobedience, disturbance or rebellion, the Sultan would either send an army from the central government or mobilize the troops maintained under the *havaldar* and the *desais* of other *parganas* to crush the revolt and arrest the *desai*, and send him to the capital. His office and remuneration would then be attached (*amanat*) to the government and managed by a bureaucrat temporarily sent out by the Court.[53] Later, if the offender's relatives made a petition to the Sultan for restoration of the office and remuneration to them,[54] he would usually accede to their request. However, occasionally the *miras* would be permanently confiscated and granted anew to some other Hindu who was considered fit to receive royal favour.[55]

In brief, the *desai*, the most important hereditary officer of the region, was *normally* under the strict control of the Sultan.

3. *Duties of the* Desai

Both in a Crown District and a *pargana* area, the duties of a *desai* were generally expressed in the phrase, 'to cause the soil to be cultivated and the region to prosper' (*virayat-ra maamur va abadan sakhtan*).[56] In other words, the *desai* was to look after the defence of the region, maintain security, and administer justice in disputes so as to promote the prosperity of the region and increase the revenue of the Sultanate.

Maintenance of Security: Both in a Crown District and a *pargana* area the *desai* was responsible for maintaining the security of his region, for which he kept 'his own troops' (*jamiat-i-khud*) or 'his own cavalry and infantry' (*savaran va ahsham-i-khud*) at his own expense. Such troops seem to have consisted

of from a few dozen to several hundred soldiers. Though it is not clear whether the normal number of soldiers that a *desai* was expected to keep or was allowed to keep was fixed by the Government, it is certain that he could increase the number when necessary,[57] and that the Government took it for granted that he would maintain his own troops.

The *desai* was expected to suppress disturbances and settle disputes in his area even without receiving a specific order from the Court. Otherwise the Court, being informed about the matter, would censure the *desai* for his negligence and command him to settle the matter immediately.[58] For example, a *desai* might be ordered by the Government to control the turbulent *patils* and other *desais*,[59] to root out intruders in the fiefs,[60] or even to subdue turbulence, deviation and rebellion committed by the fief-holders,[61] or local bureaucrats,[62] who were normally superior to him in the official hierarchy. A few words may be added to explain this point. The *desai's* 'obeisance' to the *havaldar* or the fief-holder does not mean that the former's personal subordination to the latter was total. The *desai's* first duty was, as mentioned above, to maintain his loyalty to the Sultan. As a part of this duty he was ordered by the Sultan to obey his local bureaucrat, either a *havaldar* or fief-holder, so long as he was faithful to their master. Accordingly, when a local bureaucrat showed signs of disloyalty to the Sultan, it was a duty of the *desai* to subdue him.

Two further remarks may be added concerning the *desai's* responsibilities for security. First, he was not authorized to award capital punishment to a criminal without an order from the central government.[63] Second, the *desai* and other minor hereditary officers were not only authorized but were compelled by the Government to bring back persons who had run away (*paraganda*) from their home country.[64] Even when people ran away owing to unbearable demands or oppression, the *desai* was expected to bring them back to their villages and make them settle down and carry on with cultivation, even though it was also necessary for him to give them an assurance (*qual*) and consolation (*didari*) that such hardships would never occur in future.[65]

Military Duties: The *desais* had to perform defensive and offensive activities along with their troops. When the military action was against a foreign power, it appears to have been usual for the *desais* of crown districts to mobilize themselves under the command of the *havaldar*, although it sometimes happened that they would receive a special order from the central government to come to the capital with their troops or to join a general sent out by the Sultan.[66]

Desais of *parganas* assigned in fiefs seem to have followed the command of the fief-holder,[67] while those of the *parganas* attached to the Court were ordered to come to the capital or to fight under a general sent from the Court.[68]

In either case many *desais* did participate in fighting against foreign enemies, and those who distinguished themselves in the war would have their *inam* increased[69] or would receive a 'royal robe of honour' (*khilat-i-fakhir* or *khirat-i-shahi*) from the Sultan.[70] One *desai* seems to have fought so well against the Mughal invasion that he was granted the title of minister (*vazir*) with 500 cavalry, and a fief (here called *jagir*) from the Sultan.[71]

Judicial Functions: The *desai's* responsibilities concerning criminal offences committed in his territory have been discussed before. Here we shall focus our attention on his civil judiciary functions; i.e., his adjudication of disputes over the property and rights connected with hereditary offices.

The parties to a dispute might put their case before the local bureaucrats, the fief-holder, the *desai* of the place,[72] or directly before the central Court.[73]When the central Court received the appeal, it would usually refer the case back to the local *havaldar*, the fief-holder, or the *desai* of the place and order him to solve it 'upon the evidence of the neighbours' (*baitifaq-i-khalq-i-javar*) of the disputants.[74] This phrase shows that neither the *desais* nor the local bureaucrats or the fief-holders were authorized to decide cases on their arbitrary judgement. To give justice 'upon the evidence of the neighbours' meant to hold an assembly (*majalis*) composed of the disputants, the *desai* and other hereditary officers, artisans, servants and farmers of the disputant's village or region, as well as several local bureaucrats; to get evidence separately from each person in the assembly who was

considered to be well versed in the affair; and then to decide the case upon the evidence thus submitted, and issue the document of decision (*mahazar*) to the parties concerned in the name of the *majalis*.[75] When the *majalis* could not settle the matter, it would refer the case to a 'Divine Ordeal' (*divya*) between the parties.[76] Since Dr V. T. Gune has published a work on the judicial system of medieval Maharashtra, we need not go into its details.[77] Adding only a few words on this topic should suffice. First, the local assembly of justice was not, as is often claimed, a *romantic* meeting for the self-control of the people's community without the participation of the State. The *desai* and other hereditary officers along with several bureaucrats of the region, all of whom represented the State power in their respective capacities *vis-a-vis* the people, took part in the assembly. Second, what is to be noted here, however, is not that the State power participated in the assembly but that the *de jure* authority of awarding a decision in a case was held not by any individual, whether a *havaldar*, a fief-holder or a *desai*, but by the assembly, which included a number of ordinary people as its members, and that a decision which did not get the confirmation of the local society was considered invalid.[78] In short, the judicial functions of the *desais* as well as the bureaucrats were confined normally to summoning the assembly, presiding over it, and confirming the decision made by it.[79] Third, similar judicial system can be traced in ancient India.[80] The Muslim dynasties seem to have adopted the same system. Whatever may have been their intention in maintaining it, there is no doubt that this system put a strong restriction on the *desai's* power over his *inam* village or the fief-holder's authority over his fief, and it played an important part in enforcing the social will of the locality on the people and in preserving the traditional socio-economic order among them.

caste societies

Revenue Collection: The duties and functions of a *desai* concerning security, military affairs, and judicial administration were basically the same in a crown district as in a *pargana* area. But there seems to have been an important difference in his duties concerning revenue collection between the two kinds of administrative divisions. We shall discuss first the collection and

management of revenue in the *pargana* areas.

(1) As has been mentioned before, there were three ways of administering the *parganas*: the first was to assign the whole of a *pargana* to a bureaucrat as his fief and leave it in his charge; the second, to assign part of a *pargana* to middle-class bureaucrats as their fiefs, attach the rest to the central government and puṭ it in charge of the *desai* of the *pargana*; the third, to attach the whole of a *pargana* to the central government, and put its administration under the *desai's* responsibility while sending a supervisor (called *mahaldar*) to check his administration. The method of revenue collection and the *desai's* role in it in the fiefs of bureaucrats in regard to the first two types of administrative arrangements mentioned above will be discussed later when we bring our attention to the system of fief-management. Here we shall examine the *desai's* role in revenue collection in the *pargana* (or its parts) temporarily attached to the central government.

In such a *pargana*, the *desai* had both the right and responsibility of collecting the revenue and sending it to the capital. A *farman* dated 20 January 1612 specifically forbids the *havaldar* of *muamala* Torgal to meddle in the revenue collection of the neighbouring *pargana* Gadag and states that the revenue of the *pargana* will be collected by its *desai* and sent by him to the capital.[81] There are other *farmans* sent to various *parganas* to the effect that the *desai* should collect the revenue from the villages and send it to the Royal Presence (*huzur*) or the Royal Court (*dargah*).[82] It was not always the *huzur* or *dargah* to which the *desai* was to send the revenue. Occasionally, he was ordered to send it to some other places specified by the Court.[83]

We will discuss here briefly the procedure of revenue collection. The *desai* and the *deshkulkarni* 'assessed' (*sanchni*) the revenue of each village in collaboration with its *patil* and *kulkarni*, and reported the assessed amount to the Court, which in turn examined the reported amount, determined the sum to be actually collected (*jamabandi*) and informed the *desai*. The *desai* was to collect the sum thus fixed from each village through its *patil* and send it to the Court.[84]

Some other responsibilities of a *desai* related to the collection of revenue should be mentioned. (1) It was his duty to procure certain goods and materials specially required from the *pargana* for military and other governmental activities,[85] to extract 'forced labour' (*bigar*) for building, military, and other government works, or to collect money in place of forced labour, employ workers, pay them their wages, and send them to the place specified by the Government.[86] (2) There were some *desais* who were given the revenue due from certain villages, and this they were required to use for maintaining a regular supply of a fixed number of foot-soldiers to the Government (viz. recruitment-farming).[87]

(2) While it was the *desai* who was responsible for collecting the revenue in the attached *pargana* and sending it to the Government, in the crown district the *havaldar* had these responsibilities. One *farman* clearly states that the *havaldar* of a *muamala* sent the revenue collectors (*tahsildar*) from his office to collect the revenue from villages.[88] In other words, the *desai* in a crown district was deprived of the important function of direct collection of revenue.

However, it should not be imagined that a *desai* had nothing to do with the collection of revenue in a crown district. For example, the *havaldar* and clerks (*karkunan*) of *qalah* Shahdurg were ordered by the Sultan 'not to undertake any work necessary for security, the distribution of revenue-burdens among the villages, justice, and so on without his (the *desai's*) agreement . . ., (and) to understand properly his honour and customary rule.'[89] And when the *patils* in Muamala Sandalapur pointed out to the *havaldar* the unequal rates of revenue between different regions of the Muamala and requested him to make them equal the *havaldar* answered, 'Since we have obtained the agreement of *deshmukh* (*deshmukhacha katba*) to collect the revenue at these rates, we have already reported the matter to the *huzur*. As we are not allowed to collect revenue (at a changed rate) without the permission (of the *huzur*), we shall report your case to the *huzur* and try to meet your wishes after we have received a reply (from the *huzur*).'[90] In brief, the *desai* in a crown district had neither the right nor the responsibility *directly* to collect the revenue and send it to the court. Neverth-

less, it was necessary to get his agreement in distributing revenue-burdens or deciding revenue-rates.

4. *Remuneration of the* Desai

As remuneration for the performance of the duties discussed above, the *desai* was authorized by the Sultan to enjoy perpetually some *inam* and other rights. A *desai's* remuneration usually consisted of the posssession of several villages (*inam gaon*) as well as some land (*inam zamin*) in other villages of his region, and the right to receive some money or materials from each of the ordinary villages. But since the remuneration was essentially a 'royal favour', there was no fixed formula on the basis of which the size of remuneration to be granted any *desai* could be fixed. Rather, it differed from case to case according to such factors as the importance of services rendered by a *desai's* family to the Sultanate, the financial and military situation of the Sultan, and, indeed, the generosity of the Sultan. In what follows a typical example of a *desai's* remuneration is given in the next few paragraphs, followed by a discussion of several important points about it.

Deshmukh Kanhoji Jedhe (alternately called *desai*) of *tarf* Bhor in qalah Rohira was granted an *inam* in 1608–9 by the Nizamshahi dynasty which then ruled over this area. The *inam* consisted of two villages in the *tarf* with all the items of revenue (*kulbab*) and all kinds of customary dues (*kulqanun*) of the two villages as well as the small dues (*haqqlavazima*) and *ṣahane sari* (?) from all other villages in the *tarf*. This *inam* was re-confirmed by the same dynasty in 1628.[91]

This area was annexed to Adilshahi Sultanate in 1636. After some time, *deshmukh* Kanhoji Jedhe appears to have rendered great service to Adilshahi Sultan against the Mughals. At any rate, Muhammad Adilshah granted the *deshmukh* in 1637 another village in the *tarf* as *inam* with 'all the items of revenue (*kulbab*) and all kinds of customary dues (*kulvajuhat*).'[92] And again, in 1638, the Sultan, upon the recommendation of the *havaldar* of the qalah, gave him as additional *inam* (*isabat gaon*), another

village that had been enjoyed (? *bhogavatah*) by the Jedhes for a long period of time.[93] And two years later, in 1640, the Sultan issued a *farman* to the *havaldar*, clerks (*Karkunan*), and *deshmukhs* and officers (*adhikariyan*) of Qalah Rohira, which states as follows:[94]

> Kanoji Desmuk of *tarf* Bhor of the above *qalah* petitioned to the Court: 'Village Anborah with its market-place (*bazar*) and Village Kari since the time of Malik Ambar (Prime Minister of the Nizamshahi Sultanate), and Village Chikalgaon and Village Natanbi of the above *tarf* through the favour (of the Adilshahi dynasty): the above four villages have been continued as my *inam* along with all items of revenue (*kulbab*), all kinds of dues (*kulvajubat*), miscellaneous customary dues (*sayar kanunat*), various emoluments (*lavazimat*), and collection of items and shares (*jamia-i-babba va pattiba*) according to the Nizamshahi *farman* and the *farman* (of the present dynasty). Besides these, small dues (*haqq lavazima*), dues in cloth (*patti pachori*), and *sane sari* (?) (from each village of the *tarf*) have also been continued (as mine). At present, however, the local police station (*thanah*) denies the *farmans* and creates disturbances. It demands money which the above villages have not paid hitherto. Please grant royal consideration to the matter.' What is the reason that the *thanah* denies the *farmans*, and creates disturbances and troubles on account of the money which the above villages have never paid before, while the above villages and other emoluments are to be enjoyed (by him) according to the Nizamshahi *farman* and the auspicious and holy *farman* (of the present dynasty)? Therefore as soon as this *farman* reaches there, acknowledge the above four villages with the market place along with all items of revenue, all kinds of dues, miscellaneous customary dues, various emoluments and collection of items and shares, as well as the small dues, dues in cloth and *sane sari* (?) (from each village of the *tarf*), as confirmed for the *inam* of the above *desmuk* according to the Nizamshahi *farman* and the auspicious and holy *farman* (of the present dynasty), and restore them to him.

Moreover it is ordered that the purchase-tax (*zakat patti*), well-irrigation-tax (*zakat hundah*), tax on the additional cultivation of wasteland (*chikalvetah*),[95] coconut tax (*belekati*), shoe-tax (*paiposhi*), feasting tax (*mezbani*), *nausel bel* (?), consumption tax (? kh*archpatti*), war tax (*jangpatti*), the presents (*peshkashi*), *taqaddama vajh ek mah ahudehdar* (?), mango tax (*anbarai*), menial service of mahar (*parevar*), bedstead supplied by carpenter (*palang sutar*), timber (*sar*), fines (*gunhe*), business tax (*muhtarfa*), forced labour (*bet va bigar*), tribute (*farmaish*), other dues in kind (*ghairah mahasul*), betel-leaves (*patarkeni*), and other dues (*baze babha*) which are levied at present or will accrue in future from the above villages shall be given to him.

Do not disturb him hereafter. Do not raise objections in any way. Let his son and grandson carry it on after him. Whosoever raises objections about the matter shall be considered a criminal against the Court. Do not demand the renewed *farman* every year. Make a copy of this *farman* and send the original to him. Carry out the order of this holy *farman*.

Another instance may be added. Two and a half months after the *farman*, translated above, had been issued, the same *deshmukh* was given six *tankha* (a unit of land-measurement) of black land in another village as 'perpetual *inam*' (*inam-i-abadi*) with 'all items of revenue payable therefrom that are registered in the Government ledger at present or will be created in future' such as dues in kind (*mahasul*), dues in cash (*naqdiyat*), small dues (*jamia-i-lavazimat*), forced labour (*bet va bigar*), tribute (*farmaish*), consumption tax (*?kharhpatti*), sel bel (?), well-irrigation tax (*zakat-i-hundi*), tax on additional cultivation of the wasteland (*chikal vetah*), *tahapatti* (?), coconut tax (*belekati*), war tax (*jang-patti*), the presents (*peshkash*), shoe tax (*paiposhi*), feasting tax (*mezbani*), and other miscellaneous items of cash and grains (*sayar abvab-i-naqdi va jinnas*).[96]

On the basis of the example given above, we may summarize the important aspects of a *desai's* remuneration as follows:

(1) The remuneration granted or confirmed by the previous dynasty was normally continued by the Adilshahi dynasty.

(2) The Sultans often granted a special favour to those *desais* who had particularly distinguished themselves in service, and increased their remuneration.

(3) There was a surprising variety of taxes and dues levied in this Sultanate. Though the same kinds of taxes and dues were not always levied throughout the Sultanate, yet more or less similar kinds were collected in other regions as well.

(4) What is particularly noteworthy here is not the variety of taxes itself, but the fact that neither the exact amount (or quantity) to be levied on each item nor the total amount (or quantity) payable as the remuneration as a whole is shown in any way. This means that the remuneration was not fixed in amount or in quantity.[97] In other words, the *desai* was empowered to levy on his own discretion dues and taxes on the items authorized by the Government, even though this discretion must have been tempered by the traditional customs and usages of the region, the violation of which would cause discontent and even drive people to flee from their villages. Yet even if the people ran away, the *desai* was entitled to force them back to their villages. However, he was also censured by the Government for oppression and then he had to issue the assurance (*qaul*) and consolation (*dildari*) to the people as mentioned before.

(5) What the *desai* was granted by the Sultan was not only the right to appropriate the dues and taxes to himself but also a kind of overlordship over the *inam* villages and *inam* lands. For example, the *patil* and *kulkarni* of one *deshmukh's inam* village were specifically ordered by the Sultan 'to serve the *deshmukh*-ship' (*deshmukhichi nafrai karnen*),[98] the *patil*, the *kulkarni* and the people (*rayani*) of another *deshmukh's inam* village were commanded by the Government 'to obey his command and continue to respect him from one generation to another.'[99] Thus we may conclude that the *patil*, the *kulkarni* and the people of a *desai's inam* village were the servants and subjects of not only the Sultan but also of the *desai* himself. Because of this overlordship, the *desai* could increase the *inam* land and other perquisites of the *patil* and *kulkarni* of his *inam* village at his own discretion and such an increase would receive the approval of the Government.[100]

(6) Nevertheless, the *desai's* overlordship was restricted by local customs and judicial institutions. The *desai* could not normally interfere with the *established* offices and emoluments of such officers as the *patil* and *kulkarni* in his *inam* village,[101] for these offices with their perquisites had been, as mentioned before, recognized by the Sultan and confirmed as such by the local society. Not only the *established* offices and perquisites, but also any *new* emoluments once sanctioned by the *desai* himself, perhaps at the cost of a part of his own income, could not be revoked by him if it had once been recognized by the Government and the local society.[102] Even if the *desai* tried to revoke such emoluments, the village officer who enjoyed the new perquisites given him by the *desai* could appeal to the nearby local bureaucrats to summon a local assembly and re-confirm his rights.[103]

5. Deshkulkarni (*or* Deshpande)

The *deshkulkarni*, in collaboration with the *desai*, was expected to participate in the collection of revenue, to sit in the judicial assembly, and to prepare and keep various records. As literacy was an essential qualification for the *deshkulkarni*ship, the office was generally occupied by Brahmans.

While the *desai's* function in revenue-collection differed between a crown district and a *pargana* areas, the *deshkulkarni's* role seems to have been practically the same in both areas. For example, the *havaldar* or a *muamala* was ordered by the Sultan 'to perform the assessment (*sanchni*), demand (*talab*), collection (*tahsil*), recording (*mahazar*), deduction (*mafrugh*) and other tasks in regard to revenue with the agreement of his (the *deshkulkarni's*) (*ba-itifaq-i-o*)...[and] not to perform administration (*amal*) without his acknowledgement (*be waquf-i-o*).'[104] Both in a *pargana* attached to the Court[105] and in one assigned as fief[106] the *deshkulkarni* along with the *desai* assessed and collected revenue from each village. It was also the *deshkulkarni* who usually wrote the documents in the local assembly.

In return for performing these tasks, the *deshkulkarni* was given a remuneration in the region by the Sultan which was usually half the size of, but quite independent of that of the

desai.[107] As the *deshkulkarni's* authority and power over his *inam* villages and *inam* lands appear to have been similar to those of the *desai*, we need not go into details about them.

However, two points may be stressed. (1) The *deshkulkarni's* office and remuneration were not attached or subordinated to those of the *desai*, but separately sanctioned by the Sultan so that the *desai* was not allowed to interfere with them.[108] The *desai* and the *deshkulkarni*, as hereditary officers distinct from each other, were commanded by the Sultan to co-operate and devote themselves to the service of the Sultanate.[109] (2) Though the prototype of the *deshkulkarni* may have existed in the pre-Muslim period, it seems to have been during the Muslim period that his office and remuneration were established and organized as basically separate from and independent of those of the *desai*. If this was the case, we may presume that by separating the office of *deshkulkarni* from that of *desai* and by conferring upon the former a remuneration half as big as that of the latter, the Muslim dynasties utilized the *deshkulkarni* as a check on the administrative activities of the *desai*.

Thus we may conclude as follows:

If an indigenous dynasty had to depend greatly—and there is little doubt about it—upon the most influential social strata among the indigenous people for the daily administration over the local people, it was even more necessary for an alien dynasty to so depend on the same social strata, particularly when the subject people had a religion, customs and traditions which were different from those of the new rulers. It was the hereditary officers, particularly the *desais* and *deshkulkarnis*, who were recognized as representing the indigenous people and were, therefore, utilized to make the Hindus administer the Hindus.

IV. DUTIES AND REMUNERATION OF THE *HAVALDAR* OF CROWN DISTRICTS

While one pillar of the local administration was the indigenous hereditary officers, another was the crown bureaucrats. We may, however, skip over the often-described four groups of the

latter: foreign Muslims (*pardeshi*), native converts (*Deccani*), African Muslims (*habsi* or *siddi*), and the Hindu bureaucrats. In this section we shall focus our attention upon the functions and rewards of the *havaldars* of crown districts (*muamala* and *qalah*).

As already pointed out, there was a *havaldar* in every *muamala* and *qalah*, appointed personally by the Sultan. When this office fell vacant temporarily or the *havaldar* was absent from the station, a deputy (*Naib-i-Ghaibat*) was appointed (perhaps) by the Sultan. Occasionally, *sar-havaldar* (a superior to the *havaldar*) would be appointed. But a *sar-havaldar's* functions being the same as those of a *havaldar*, this appointment was rarely made. We would therefore ignore the *sar-havaldar* in this article.

Below the *havaldar* were army-commanders (*sar-i-grohan*) and clerks (*karkunan*) as well as the hereditary guards of the fortress (*Naikwadiyan*).[110] In addition, the Sultan also appointed a chief of the city police (*kotwal*) in the capital of Bijapur[111] as also perhaps in other capital cities of crown districts, and in the important towns there was a police station (*thanah*), the chief of which (*thanedar*) was also probably appointed by the Sultan.[112] The most important of these bureaucrats was the *havaldar*.

As the *havaldar*, his deputy, and the *sar-havaldar*, occasionally appointed over the *havaldar*, were charged with the highest responsibility in the administration of a crown district, most of them were expectedly Muslims. For example, out of forty-one *havaldars* whose names appear in our *farmans*, only seven were Hindus, the remaining thirty-four Muslim. Nine deputies and seven *sar-havaldars* mentioned in the *farmans* were all Muslims.

1. *The* Havaldar *and the Sultan*

Some aspects of the basic relationship between the Sultan and the *havaldar* may be pointed out.

It appears to have been usual for the Sultan to get the agreement (*qarar*) of the bureaucrat to whom he wanted to grant a favour by appointing him as a *havaldar*. At the time of his appointment

the *havaldar* was given a 'royal robe of honour' and he had to deposit his surety (*zaman* or *zamanit*) as the security for his loyalty.[113]

The fact that the Sultan had to get the nominal agreement of the bureaucrat for appointment and that some *havaldars* had such titles as 'member of the royal assembly' (*majalsi* or *majalsi-i-huzur*)[114] or 'head of a royal department' (*Mahaldar-i-huzur*)[115] shows that only the trusted and high-class bureaucrats were usually appointed to this post.

As the appointment was made by 'royal favour', however, there was no fixed tenure of office. There was frequent and irregular transfer of personnel at intervals varying from a few months to about three years. For example, in Muamala Sandalapur, a total of fifteen *havaldars* occupied the office from September 1640 to March 1662.[116] It often happened that a bureaucrat, removed from the *havaldarship*, was reappointed to the same office after some time. Out of the fifteen *havaldars* referred to above, at least three occupied the office twice at different times during the period specified above. One bureaucrat who had served as the *havaldar* was later appointed the *sar-havaldar* of the same district.[117] The reasons for these frequent personnel changes are not clear. Yet it is evident that the office of *havaldar* was not hereditary and that frequent transfer restrained a *havaldar* from establishing a personal connection with any particular District.

It is said that there was the system of 'offical ranking' (so-called mansab) indicated by the number of troops to be maintained by a bureaucrat in this Sultanate as in other Muslim kingdoms of India.[118] But our sources do not show the exact number of soldiers maintained by a *havaldar*. We may however infer that, since a *desai* who distinguished himself in the royal service was entitled to keep five hundred cavalrymen and held the title of minister (*vazir*),[119] a *havaldar* would maintain far fewer soldiers. However, the fact that a *havaldar* maintained a certain number of soldiers on his own account does not mean that all the bureaucrats working under him in the crown district were in his *personal* employ. As mentioned before, the army-commanders (*sari-*

gurohan), clerks (*karkunan*) and chief of the police station (*thanedar*) were appointed separately,[120] and at least the first[121] and the last[122] of these bureaucrats were perhaps appointed by the Sultan directly.

2. *Duties of the* Havaldar

A *farman* defines the general duties of the *havaldar* as 'to exert himself to the utmost to strengthen the fort and ensure the cultivation and prosperity of the region'.[123] Except for the specific emphasis on the security and strengthening of the fort, his general duties were almost the same as those of a *desai* as discussed before, viz. military affairs, security, administration of justice, and collection of revenue.

Military and Security Duties: It is not necessary to discuss in detail the military and security duties of a *havaldar*.[124] We would mention only three points concerning his responsibilities for security. (1) When any peasant absconded from his village for some reason or other, it was the responsibility of the *havaldar* to have the hereditary officer of the place call him back to the village.[125] (2) Also when a mass of villagers ran away from their village because of some illegal exactions or oppression by the hereditary officers, the local bureaucrats, or the army, the *havaldar* was to control the oppressors and issue 'assurance' (*qual*) and 'consolation' (*dildari*) to the villagers to induce them to come back and carry on with cultivation.[126] (3) The *havaldar* does not appear to have been authorized, however, to punish the offenders. He could exercise his punitive power only on receiving specific orders from the Court.[127]

Judicial Functions: The *havaldar's* judicial function over civil disputes was basically the same as that of the *desai*: his function was confined to accepting appeals from the disputants, summoning assemblies of justice, often sitting in them himself, and confirming and executing decisions made by such assemblies.[128] The structure and significance of such assemblies have already been discussed.

Revenue Collection: The *havaldar* was directly responsible

to the Sultan for collecting revenue from the villages[129] through his collectors (*tahsildar*). He was also responsible for collecting annual tributes, payable to the Sultan, from the *desai* and other hereditary officers of his district,[130] and for sending them to the royal treasury. It was also his duty to procure forced labourers and construction-workers temporarily required by the royal Court.[131]

It should, however, be noted that the *havaldar* was not a so-called institutional tax-farmer, for he was specifically ordered in a *farman* 'not to exact any additional revenue from the villages (beyond the authorized amount). If you levy even a single additional penny and the villages complain of it to the Court, you must know that you have to compensate for the additional exaction and that the result will not be good. Obey the strict order on this matter and do not collect even an extra penny.'[132] As mentioned before, the *havaldar* was required to report the assessed amount of revenue of his district to the royal Court and, after getting its confirmation and sanction, to collect the actual revenue.[133] This fact together with what is said in the above *farman* show that he was not regarded as some functionary like a tax-farmer.

There were two important checks on the administrative tasks of the *havaldar*. First, as already discussed, although the *desai* and *deshkulkarni* of a crown district were to obey the commands of the *havaldar*, the latter also had to get the agreement of the former with regard to revenue-collection and other administrative tasks. Second, the royal Court occasionally sent a special bureaucrat to the district, for supervising (*nigah*) the general administration of the *havaldar* and report his observation to the Court.[134] By such measures the Sultan tried to put his *havaldars* under complete control.

3. *Remuneration of the* Havaldar

A *farman*, which announced the appointment of a bureaucrat to the *havaldar*ship of Muamala Sandalapur, ordered the clerks, army-commanders, fort-guards, *desais* and ordinary people

(*jamhur*) or the Muamala to obey the command and rule of the new *havaldar* and 'to acknowledge the monthly salary (*musha-hara*) and the share of revenue (*tankhwah*) for the *havaldar*ship (*havaldari*) in the same way as hitherto'.[135] This *farman* suggests that the *havaldar* was probably paid a monthly salary from the royal treasury as well as a share of revenue from the district, and that those remunerations were so connected with the office of *havaldar*ship that the right to receive them was automatically transferred from the predecessor to the successor. Our sources do not reveal any other information about the *havildar's* remuneration.

Yet a high-class bureaucrat who was appointed a *havaldar* was, besides the emoluments just mentioned, favoured with a fief (*muqasa*) 'on account of his integrity' (*dar wajh-i-istiqamat*) that was not always connected with any specific office. For example, one year after the appointment to this *havaldar*ship, the same bureaucrat, who was still in the office, was granted a village in the same district along with all items of its revenue except the tobacco tax, betel-leaves tax and existing *inams* 'on account of his integrity'.[136] The Sultan might have conferred on him not one but several villages at different times and in different localities; there is no such record, however, in our sources. At any rate what is important here is that the high-class bureaucrat was favoured with a temporary overlordship of certain villages or areas 'on account of his integrity'.

We may thus summarize the general position of the *havaldar* as follows. (1) The *havaldar* was a bureaucrat of the Sultan whom the latter could appoint or discharge as he pleased. The district was not put under his sole management: the other bureaucrats working under him were not his personal followers but the Sultan's bureaucrats. His administration was checked by these middle-class bureaucrats, by the special supervisor occasionally sent to his district, and by the hereditary officers of the district. Moreover his salaries were connected not with his person but with the office he held so that as soon as he was discharged he was no more entitled to them. We may therefore characterize him, using Max Weber's terminology, as a 'patrimonial

bureaucrat' of the Sultan. (2) But he was not only a 'patrimonial bureaucrat', he was also granted an overlordship of certain areas and he held a certain number of troops at his own cost. In that sense he had traits of the 'feudal bureaucrat' too.

This dual character of bureaucracy was not confined to the *havaldar* alone. All the high-class as well as many of the middle-class bureaucrats of the Sultanate had the same dual character. We shall now turn our attention to the 'feudal' aspect of bureaucracy and discuss the system of 'fiefs' that was prevalent in this Sultanate.

V. FIEFS FOR THE BUREAUCRATS

1. Three Classes of Fiefs

Although small fiefs were often granted in crown districts, most of them, especially the big ones, were usually assigned in *pargana* areas as pointed out before.

When we closely examine a large number of *farmans*, we recognize broadly three classes of fiefs. They are what may be called specified fiefs, office fiefs, and integrity fiefs. While no technical term is attached to the first class, in our records, the last two are usually called *muqasa*; sometimes the last class is also called *jagir*.[137]

Specified Fiefs: This class of fiefs was an assignment of a *specified share* (*taqsim*, an annual amount ranging from 200 Hons to 600 Hons or Rs 800 to Rs 2400) of the revenue from a village to the royal cavalry-men such as *sillahdar*, *lashkari-afrad* and *lashkari*,[138] in lieu of their monthly salary (*mushahara*). It was given not by a special royal favour but in a more business-like manner so that when its holder did not maintain his horse and weapons, neglected to report when commanded, absconded or died, the fief was immediately suspended.[139] The holder was not entitled to rule over the village but only to receive the specified amount either through his agent (*mutaaliq*) or directly from the hereditary officer of the place.

Office-Fiefs: This was an assignment of one or several villages with its revenue of all items (or with the exception of a few) to middle-class bureaucrats such as army-commanders (*sari-rohan*),[140] cavalry-captains (*havaldar-i-afrad*),[141] infantry-captains (*jamaat-dar*)[142] and clerks of various central departments such as Royal Secretariat (*Mahal-i-Shab-Navis*),[143] Department of Robes (*Mahal-i-Jamdar-Khana*),[144] Department of Building (*Mahal-i-Imarat-i-Huzur*),[145] Department of Furniture (*Mahal-i-Farash*-Khana),[148] and Department of Wagons (*Mahal-i-Vahali*),[149] as well as royal musicians (*tassiyan*),[150] and some cavalry-men such as *sillahdar*,[151] *lashkari-afrad*,[152] and *lashkari*.[153] Like the specified fief, this was also given not by any special royal favour but in a business-like manner and was so connected with certain offices, such as those mentioned above, that it was promptly withdrawn in case of negligence, transfer, discharge, or death.

There was, however, a significant difference between a specified fief and an office fief. While for the former only a specified amount of revenue was assigned, for the latter, one or several villages were assigned along with its (or their) revenue, the amount of which was not clearly specified. In other words, the office-fief conferred on the grantee a kind of overlordship of a certain area.

As regards the method of administering the fief, the fief-holder either entrusted its management to the hereditary officers of the village[154] or sent his own agents (*mutaaliqan*) to it.[155] In any case he himself occasionally visited the fief for supervision.[156].

Regarding the extent of his overlordship, three aspects may be pointed out. First, even when the fief was granted in a Crown District, it was immunized from the daily administration of the *havaldar* and his subordinates.[157] Secondly, it was the holder who decided the extent[158] of revenue and the way[159] of collecting it. And thirdly, the hereditary officers of the village were duty-bound to collect the revenue and submit it to the grantee at the risk of mortgaging their offices[160] or paying fines in case of delay.[161]

On the other hand, there were several important restrictions

imposed on the fief-holder's overlordship. Firstly, he was not authorized to interfere with the established office and rights of the hereditary officers of the village.[162] Secondly, he did not have the authority to punish the hereditary officers of the village.[163] And thirdly, apart from the general control of the Government over the oppression and excesses committed by the fief-holder, there was the resistance of the hereditary officers and people of the village who even resorted to mass absconding against extra-customary exactions and oppression.[164]

The third class of fiefs, the integrity fief, was the most important so far as the local administration of the Sultanate was concerned. Therefore, we discuss this in some detail in the following section.

2. *Integrity Fiefs*

General Remarks: While the two classes of fiefs discussed above were granted in a business-like manner, in connection with certain offices and not by any special royal favour, the integrity fief was given by some special royal favour 'on account of the integrity' (*dar wajh-i-istiqamat*) of the grantee, and it was not connected with any specific office, for the *farmans* do not mention the name of any office held by the grantee but only enumerate various 'eulogies' for him. However, when we examine the names of grantees, it becomes evident that many of them were high-class bureaucrats who appear in general historical books of this Sultanate as various ministers, supreme commanders of the royal army (*sari-khail-mumalik*), divisional commanders of the royal army (*sapah-i-salar*), regional commanders of the royal army (*sari-sarinaubat*), generals (*sardar*), *havaldars* of crown districts, and so on.[165]

Although the size of fiefs of this class was often as small as a village with all items of revenue,[166] two villages with all items of revenue,[167] or three villages with all revenue items except two,[168] yet those assigned to specially high-class bureaucrats such as those mentioned above were generally large: e.g. thirty-two villages of a *samt* with all revenue items except two,[169] a town

(*qasbah*) and fourteen villages of a *qaryat* with all revenue items,[170] thirty-six villages of a *samt* with all revenue items except two,[171] a *samt* or a *qaryat* with all revenue items,[172] a *pargana* with all revenue items,[173] several *pargana* with all revenue items,[174] and so forth.

Attention may be drawn to three more points. First, however big the size of an integrity fief might be, it was normally not hereditary. For example, a document shows that *pargana* Wai was assigned as a fief to a total of thirty-two high bureaucrats from 1489 to 1678. In this case the longest term of holding was twenty-seven years and nine months while the shortest was only three months, and the average six years.[175] However, as the integrity fief was not connected with any specific office but was granted by royal favour, sometimes it would remain with the same grantee for a long period[176] and occasionally became perpetual.[177] Second, because of the Muslim dominance among the high-class bureaucrats, most of the grantees of this class of fiefs appear to have been Muslims. For example, out of the thirty-two dignitaries who held *pargana* Wai as their fief as referred to above, thirty were Muslims as against two Hindus. Third, the holders of integrity fiefs had to maintain, from the income of the fief, from some hundreds[178] to five or seven thousand[179] mounted men, and they had to serve along with their cavalry in central as well as local tasks according to the wishes of the Sultan. There was no clear distinction between civil and military bureaucrats in this Sultanate as in other Muslim kingdoms of India. The dignified bureaucrats of the Court as well as the local ones often went to the battlefield in an emergency.[180]

Organization of Fief-Management: (A) Agents (*Mutaaliqan*)—When a bureaucrat was granted a fief in certain area, he sent out his agents to manage it. In Persian *Farmans*[181] these agents were collectively called '*mutaaliqan*'.

The Marathi records show that the *mutaaliqan* of the fief-holder (*muqasai*) were organized in a similar way as the Sultan's bureaucrats in the crown district: a general manager (*havaldar*) was appointed in the fief-office (*diwan*) in the chief city of the fief[182] and a chief of police station (*thanedar*) was established in

the police station (*thana*) of all important towns and villages of the fief.[183] Besides, clerks (*karkun*)[184] and footmen (*hasham*)[185] were also assigned to the *diwan* and to every *thana*. The Marathi records show that the term clerk (*karkun*), although sometimes used to signify *havaldar* and *thanedar*, generally meant such agents as office-superintendent (*nigavan*), head clerk (*sardaftar*), captain of stationed soldiers (*sarnaubat*), treasurer (*majumdar*), pay-master (*sabnis*), keeper of the strongbox (*daftarkhas*), letter-writer (*chitnis*), and Persian writer (*parasnis*).[186]

In this connection, three points should be noted. First, most of the agent-*havaldars*, even of the Muslim fief-holders, appear to have been Hindus. For example, out of eighteen agent-*havaldars* appointed in *pargana* Wai during the period from 1636 to 1667, fourteen were Hindus as against four Muslims.[187] Second, the overwhelming majority of clerks also seem to have been Hindus. From the names appearing in Marathi records, we find that all the clerks were Hindus, except the office-superintendent (*nigavan*) and the captain of stationed soldiers (*sarnaubat*) who were Muslims.[188] Third, at least some of the Hindu clerks (e.g. pay-master and letter writer) held their office as hereditary property (*miras*).[189]

The above three points clearly suggest that the big fief-holders, though mostly Muslims, had to depend on the indigenous Hindus, especially the literate Brahmans, for administrative and the daily management of their fiefs, and that, while largely depending on them, the fief-holders specifically appointed their co-religious Muslims to such posts as office-superintendent and captain of soldiers.

(B) Agents and Hereditary Officers—When the fief-holder sent his agents to the fief, he informed all relevant hereditary officers thereof and ordered them 'to obey them (agents) and... 'to accompany them day and night and perform the tasks',[190] to regard what they say as what I say',[191] or 'to join with them and express your good wishes'.[192] Thus directed through the agents the *desai* and other hereditary officers in the fief were made responsible for the cultivation of land,[193] for collecting revenue from the villages, and reaching the revenue to the nearby *thana*,[194]

while the *thanedar* in his turn was responsible for conveying the revenue to the *diwan* of the chief city.[195]

Overlordship of the Fief-holder: (1) The fief-holder was empowered to appoint new hereditary officers to the vacant offices[196] and to increase the existing *inam* of the hereditary officers[197] as well as that of the temples and the priests residing in the fief.[198] The newly appointed hereditary officers as also those who got their *inams* increased could have the matter confirmed by the Sultan if they so desired.[199]

(2) There is no need to write much about the judicial functions of the fief-holder and his agents. When he received an appeal from disputants over the hereditary offices and other civil rights in the fief, he would summon an assembly of justice, which has already been discussed, and preside over the meeting.[200] The significance of such judicial system has also been pointed out.

(3)The Persian *farmans* show that the fief-holder and his agents were not to interfere with the established office and remuneration of the hereditary officers.[201] If they did so, the aggrieved officers could and often did appeal directly to the Sultan for the restoration and protection of their established rights.[202] Nor do they appear to have been authorized to punish any turbulent hereditary officers, for a *farman* mentions that when a *desai* illegally occupied two villages in a large fief held by a minister, the latter appealed to the Sultan and requested him to punish the offender.[203]

(4) It is important to note, however, that a number of Marathi records show that not all large fief-holders and their agents respected such restrictions imposed by the Court. They often tried to violate the 'inviolable' offices and *inams* of hereditary officers and those of temples and priests in the fief. For instance, the agents of a new fief-holder used to inspect the *miras* and *inam* of hereditary officers, of temples and priests, and demanded that these be reconfirmed by their master.[204] The agents would often disturb and sometimes even temporarily prevent the hereditary officers from enjoying their privileges.[205] At any rate it was not always enough for those who enjoyed the *miras* and *inam* to show the agents the royal documents supporting their rights

and privileges.[206] They also had to obtain a confirmation-cum-assurance letter (*khurdkhat*) issued by the new fief-holder.

Perhaps the motive behind such inspections and demands for the renewal of confirmation was to impress on the hereditary officers and the local people of the authority of the fief-holder and his agents. However, occasionally they actually violated the established office of hereditary officers and punished them as they pleased. For example, a fief-holder involved himself in a dispute over some *desai*ship, arbitrarily attached the office and its perquisites, and returned them to the holder after depriving him of Rs 2400.[207] In another instance, when, due to a famine, the *patil* and villagers fled from a village, the agent-*havaldar* summoned the *patil* to the *diwan*, commanded him to carry on the cultivation and pay the revenue from the village, and threatened him 'otherwise to surrender the *patil*ship with the *diwan* so that other persons may carry on with it, see that the soil is cultivated, and pay the revenue. Or your head shall be cut off by a sword for the revenue of the village'. In fact he imprisoned the *patil*, arbitrarily divided his office into three parts, and gave two of them to other people.[208]

Large fief-holders had a tendency to ignore the restrictions imposed on them by the central government and to strengthen the decentralizing 'feudalization' of their overlordship over the fief.

VI. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In this concluding section, the main points emerging from this study are summarized.

(1) Not to mention other hereditary officers, even the *desai* was not a *de jure* 'overlord' of a *pargana* or its minor division but a 'royal servant' who was to collect revenue, maintain security and order, and perform other official tasks in his *pargana* for the sake of the Sultan or his bureaucrat holding the fief of the region. On the other hand, the *desai* not only maintained his own troops at his own cost and exercised such powers as defence, security, revenue-collection and justice over his *par-*

gana, he was also entitled to a 'perpetual overlordship' of certain villages, although the overlordship within them was normally restricted by the traditional judicial system supported by the royal authority.

(2) The *havaldar* appointed in a crown district was, in Max Weber's terminology, a 'patrimonial bureaucrat' of the Sultan, and he supervised defence, security, revenue collection and other official work for the sake of the Sultan. He could be discharged or transferred as the Sultan pleased. Yet he had an aspect of the 'feudal bureaucrat' in the sense that he maintained troops on his own account and held a 'temporary overlordship' of a certain area.

(3) This dual character of service and responsibilities was not confined to the *havaldar* alone; it extended generally to the middle-class and particularly to the high-class bureaucrats of the Sultanate. When we examine closely the 'feudal' aspect of the bureaucracy, we find that the three different kinds of fiefs we have classified were given not in perpetuity but temporarily, and that the overlordship contained in the second and third classes of fiefs was normally restricted by the Court concerning matters of justice and punishment, the established office and perquisites of hereditary officers in the fief being, as it were, 'inviolable'.

(4) In case of large fiefs by the high-class bureaucrats, the condition of granting them was obscure 'integrity', and the overlordship extensive. Such grantees tended to ignore the restrictions imposed on their overlordship and this enhanced their power of 'decentralized feudalization' and worked towards increasing the subordination of the hereditary officers to the fief-holder.

(5) Moreover, not only the large fief-holders but the hereditary *desais* also and even the royal *havaldars* had ample scope for transforming themselves into the 'overlords' of the entire regions in their charge, once the controlling mechanism of the Sultan over them and their sentimental and practical bond with the Sultan weakened.

(6) In short, this Sultanate was a centralized monarchy which, however, widely afforded various chances for decentralization

and regional independence. When such a movement took place, it would be carried out through the conflicts, struggles, compromises and alliances between the three parties, viz. the large scale fief-holder and his agents, *desais* (or *desmukhs*) and other hereditary officers, and the bureaucrats of a crown district. From the institutional point of view, the rise of Shivaji's power might be called the most remarkable example of such a movement.

(7) On the other hand, the Adilshahi dynasty, as an alien one, had inevitably to utilize to a large extent the representative social strata of the indigenous Hindus and to depend heavily upon them for carrying on almost all the aspects of daily local administration of the Sultanate. A clear result of this situation was that, about the middle of the seventeenth century, a great number of Hindus acquired the techniques of daily administration amidst the Muslim rule. And there is no doubt that the great rise, the rapid expansion, and the quick consolidation of Shivaji's power resulting in the establishment of a solid Hindu kingdom was made institutionally possible only by the positive support and active participation of a large number of those Hindus who had trained themselves in the administrative routines under the Muslim rule. The administrative foundation for the rise of the Marathas may therefore be said to have been prepared in the Adilshahi Sultanate.

NOTES

1. For the general political history of this Sultanate, see B. P. Modak, *History of Bijapur Kings*, Kolhapur, 1886.
2. To show some works on the politico-cultural history of this Sultanate: P. M. Joshi, *The Reign of Ibrahim Adil Shah II (1580–1627) of Bijapur*, Bharatiya Vidya, vol. IX, Bombay, 1948, pp. 284–309. P. M. Joshi, *Ali Adil Shah of Bijapur (1558–1580) and His Royal Librarian*, Sardha-Satabdi Special Volume of *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bombay* (New Series), vols. 31 & 32, Bombay, 1956 & 57. Nazir Ahmad, *Farukh Husain, the Royal*

Artist at the Court of Ibrahim Adil Shah II (1580–1627), Islamic Culture, vol. 30, no. 1, Hyderabad Deccan, 1956, pp. 31–5. R. G. Gayani, *Kitab-i-Nawras*, Islamic Culture, vol. 19, 1945, pp. 140–52. K. K. Basu, *The Reign of Ali Adil Shah of Bijapur*, Indian Culture, vol. v, Calcutta, 1939, pp. 49–55. K. K. Basu, *The History of Ismail Adil Shah of Bijapur (1510–34)*, Indian Culture, vol. iv, 1939, pp. 1–17.

3. The main Persian chronicles regarding this dynasty are: (a) M. K. Firishta, *Tarikhi-Firishta*, Lucknow; English transl. by J. Briggs, *History of the Rise of the Mohammedan Power in India*, Calcutta, 1910, vol. iii, pp. 1–187; and Urdu transl. by M. F. Ali Sahab, *Tarikhi-Firishta*, vols. iii & iv, Hyderabad, 1928 & 1932. This famous work narrates the political history of the dynasty up to 1596 and hardly gives any information on the administrative institutions. (b) M. I. Zubairi, *Basatin-us-Salatin*, Bijapur, 1824. This was written 128 years after the fall of the Sultanate, and it is inadvisable to rely upon it for institutional information. B. P. Modak's *History of Bijapur Kings* (Kolhapur, 1886) is a Marathi summary of this book. Another Marathi summary by G. H. Khare is included in Bharat Itihas Sanshodhak Mandal's *Shiva Charitra Vritt Sangrah*, vol. ii, Poona, 1936. (c) M. Zahur, *Muhammad Nama* (Kapurthala Library MS). Its English summary by B. D. Verma is included in *Shivaji Nibandhvali*, vol. ii, Poona, 1930 and a Marathi summary by G. H. Khare in *Shiva Charitra Vritt Sangrah*. It gives some information on institutions. (d) Sayyid Nurullah, *Tarikhi-Ali Adil Shah II* (India Office Library MS). G. H. Khare's Marathi summary is in *Shiva Charitra Vritt Sangrah*. (e) M. Nusrat, *Alinama* (India Office Library MS). G. H. Khare's Marathi summary is in *Shiva Charitra Vritt Sangrah*.
4. For the politico-cultural aspects of the rise of the Marathas, refer to J. N. Sarkar, *House of Shivaji*, 2nd ed., Calcutta, 1948. J. N. Sarkar, *Shivaji and His Times*, 5th ed., Calcutta, 1952. S. R. Sharma, *Maratha History* (*Re-examined*), Bombay, 1944.
5. G. H. Khare (ed.), *Persian Sources of Indian History* (Aitihasik Farsi Sahitya), 5 vols., Bharat Itihas Sanshodhak Mandal, Poona, 1934–61. (Abbreviated as PSIH in the subsequent notes.)
6. They are contained in Bharat Itihas Sanshodhak Mandal's *Shiva Charitra Sahitya*, 11 vols., Poona, 1926–58. (Abbreviated as SCS in the subsequent notes.)

7. Apart from the general historical books such as those of J. Grant Duff, there is only one special article on this subject to the best of my knowledge, viz. P. M. Joshi, 'Adilshahi Administration' in *Transactions of the All India History Congress*, 1940, pp. 1–13. Though instructive on some points, it is rather an old-fashioned article and is not well-documented.
8. Cf. W. H. Moreland, *The Agrarian System of Moslem India*, Allahabad ed., 1929, pp. 18–19. V. T. Gune, *Judicial System of the Marathas*, Poona, 1953, pp. 7, 16, 17.
9. K. V. Purandare (ed.), *Shiva Charitra Sahitya*, vol. VII, Poona, 1938, *Prastavana*, p. 5.
10. H. H. Wilson, *A Glossary of Judicial and Revenue Terms*, Calcutta, 1940, p. 817.
11. PSIH, vol. V, nos. 127, 128. Also see ibid., vol. I, nos. 38, 41; vol. II, no. 27.
12. K. V. Purandare, op. cit., p. 5.
13. PSIH, vol. I, nos. 31, 32; vol. II, nos. 18, 21, 22, 23, 45; vol. III, nos. 91, 92.
14. Ibid., vol. II, no. 34; vol. III, no. 55.
15. K. V. Purandare, op. cit., p. 5.
16. Ibid., p. 5.
17. PSIH, vol. I, no. 45; vol. II, no. 20; vol. V, no. 119.
18. Ibid., vol. II, no. 13; vol. III, nos. 7, 11–13, 21, 24, 27, 68; vol. V, nos. 40, 44, 87–8, 91, 95.
19. Ibid., vol. V, nos. 127–9. Qaryat ßalaghat → Samt Balaghat.
20. Ibid., vol. III, nos. 8, 9, 10, 27.
21. Ibid., vol. V, no. 134.
22. K. V. Purandare, op. cit., p. 5.
23. Ibid., pp. 5–6.
24. PSIH, vol. I, no. 41; vol. II, nos. 20, 34, vol. III, nos. 1, 10, 11, 13, 21; vol. V, nos. 40, 138, 139.
25. e.g. PSIH, vol. III, no. 37; vol. V, no. 96.
26. Ibid., vol. V, nos. 127–9.
27. SCS, vol. VI, pp 62–3.
28. Ibid., vol. VI, pp. 62–3.
29. There were six *samts* in Muamala Bankapur (PSIH, vol. III, nos. 7, 13), two *samts* in Muamala Mudgal (PSIH, vol. III, no. 68), four *samts* Muamala Sandalapur (Ibid., vol. V, nos. 44, 62, 87, 91), and two *qaryats* in Qalah Panala (Ibid., vol. V, no. 119).

30. PSIH, vol. v, nos. 127–9.
31. PSIH, vol. I, no. 26; vol. II, no. 12; vol. v, no. 91.
32. Ibid., vol. v, no. 96.
33. Ibid., vol. I, no. 39; vol. III, nos. 80, 90; vol. v, nos. 105, 134.
34. Broadly speaking the hereditary chief of a *pargana* or its minor division was called *deshmukh* in Maharashtra and *desai* in northern Karnataka. But even in Maharashtra *deshmukh* was often called *desai* alternately. Ibid., vol. I, nos. 40–50; vol. III, nos. 4, 7, 9, 15, 16.
35. Bharat Itihas Sanshodhak Mandal (ed.), *Varshik Itivritt*, Shaka 1836, no. 99, *Shaka 1126 til Marathi Tamrapat* by V. K. Rajwade. Ibid. *Varshik Itivritt*, Shaka 1837, no. 44, *Dnaneshwarkalin Gomantaki Marathi Tamrapat* by D. V. Apte. Ibid. *Varshik Itivritt*, Shaka1838, pp. 111–14, *Shaka 1126 til ek Marathi Tamrapat* by S. L. Atar.
36. SCS, vol. VII, no. 30.
37. A. S. Altekar, *The Rashtrakutas and their Times*, Poona, 1934, pp. 177–80. A. S. Altekar, *State and Government in Ancient India*, 3rd ed., Motilal Banarasidas, 1958, p. 219.
38. e.g. SCS, vol. I, no. 40.
39. PSIH, vol. I, nos. 11–13, 26.
40. Ibid., vol. III, nos. 27, 28. SCS; vol. IV, no. 698.
41. PSIH, vol. I, no. 23; vol. II, no. 13; vol. III, no. 28; vol. v, nos. 123, 124.
42. Ibid., vol. I, nos. 24, 25; vol. v, nos. 50, 101.
43. Ibid., vol. I, nos. 9, 10, 11; vol. II, nos. 13, 34; vol. III, nos. 1, 2; vol. v, nos. 101, 123, 124, 127–9.
44. SCS, vol. II, no. 218 (division of *deshmukhi*); ibid., vol. III, no. 638; vol. IV, no. 716 (sales of *kulkarni*ship); ibid., vol. III, nos. 618, 619 (sales of *patel*ship); ibid., vol. VIII, no. 70 (for necessity of confirmation by local society).
45. PSIH, vol. II, no. 13; SCS, vol. IV, no. 688.
46. e.g. PSIH, vol. v, no. 131.
47. Ibid., vol. v, no. 130. It is not clear whether other hereditary officers also had to nominate a surety to the Sultan.
48. SCS, vol. VIII, no. 9.
49. PSIH, vol. II, no. 22; vol. v, nos. 90, 115.
50. Ibid., vol. III, no. 34.
51. SCS, vol. IV, no. 721; vol. VI, no. 21.
52. PSIH, vol. II, no. 22; vol. III, nos. 13, 14, 80; vol. v, no. 111.

53. Ibid., vol. III, nos. 15, 16, 27.
54. Ibid., vol. III, no. 27.
55. G. C. Vad & P. V. Mawjee (ed.), *Decisions from the Shahu & Peshwa Daftar*, Poona, 1909, no. 18, p. 83.
56. PSIH, vol. III, no. 65; vol. V, nos. 111, 136, 140.
57. SCS, vol. II, no. 232.
58. PSIH, vol. II, no. 22.
59. Ibid., vol. II, no. 22; vol. III, nos. 11, 48.
60. Ibid., vol. III, nos. 14, 15; vol. V, nos. 138–40.
61. Ibid., vol. II, no. 25.
62. Ibid., vol. III, no. 92.
63. See notes nos. 59 to 62.
64. PSIH, vol. V, no. 58.
65. Ibid., vol. III, no. 40; vol. V, nos. 111, 136, 140.
66. Ibid., vol. I, nos. 40, 43; vol. II, nos. 20, 25; vol. III, nos. 12, 15, 16, 19, 24, 25.
67. SCS, vol. VI, no. 62.
68. PSIH, vol. III, nos. 3, 76, 77, 86; vol. V, nos. 125, 139.
69. Ibid., vol. I, nos. 41, 46; vol. III, nos. 18, 21, 81; vol. V, no. 124.
70. Ibid., vol. III, no. 86; vol. V, no. 142.
71. Ibid., vol. III, nos. 87, 88.
72. Ibid., vol. I, no. 8.
73. Ibid., vol. III, no. 48.
74. Ibid., vol. III, no. 48.
75. e.g. SCS, vol. II, nos. 218, 341; vol. III, nos. 577, 580, 637, 638; vol. IV, nos. 699, 721; vol. VII, nos. 7, 60; vol. VIII, no. 70.
76. Ibid., vol. VII, no. 1.
77. V. T. Gune, *Judicial System of the Marathas*, Poona, 1953.
78. Vide SCS, vol. VIII, no. 70.
79. In this connection refer to Daniel Thorner: 'Feudalism in India' in *Feudalism in History*, ed. by R. Coulborn, Princeton University Press, 1956, p. 147.
80. Radha Kumud Mookerji, *Local Government in Ancient India*, Delhi, 1958, ch. v.
81. PSIH, vol. III, no. 37. 'zar-i-mazkur-ra Desai-i-Pargana-i-mazkur ba-vasur rasanidah murusul-i-Huzur *kh*wahad namud'.
82. Ibid., vol. III, nos. 56, 65, 71.
83. Ibid., vol. III, no. 73.
84. SCS, vol. VIII, no. 8.
85. PSIH, vol. III, no. 72.

86. Ibid., vol. III, no. 55.
87. Ibid., vol. III, no. 81.
88. PSIH, vol. III, no. 37.
89. Ibid., vol. V, no. 129.
90. SCS, vol. XI, no. 96, p. 66.
91. Ibid. vol. II, nos. 203, 205.
92. PSIH, vol. I, no. 41.
93. Ibid., vol. I, no. 44.
94. Ibid., vol. I, no. 45. Also see SCS, vol. II, no. 213.
95. Though the exact meaning of this term is not clear, Professor G. H. Khare, the editor of the source-book, tentatively interprets that the *chikal* was a share of produce paid by a farmer who planted paddy on a wasteland of the village and the *vetah* was an additional tax on a part of the field in compensation for another part of the field lowly assessed.
96. PSIH, vol. I, no. 46.
97. So far as we know, there is only one instance where the cash dues given to the *deshmukh* and *deshpande* in addition to the *inam* villages were fixed in amount by the Court. Ibid., vol. III, no. 4.
98. SCS, vol. III, no. 577; vol. VII, no. 60.
99. Ibid., vol. VI, no. 23.
100. Ibid., vol. III, no. 577; vol. VII, no. 60.
101. Ibid., vol. III, nos. 576, 580–81; vol. VIII, no. 25.
102. Ibid., vol. VII, no. 60.
103. Ibid., vol. III, no. 577; vol. VII, no. 60.
104. PSIH, vol. III, no. 68.
105. SCS, vol. VIII, no. 9.
106. Ibid., vol. I, no. 45; vol. VIII, no. 63.
107. PSIH, vol. I, nos. 6, 23–6, 28; vol. III, nos. 4, 68; vol. V, no. 117. SCS, vol. VIII, no. 84.
108. PSIH, vol. I, nos. 19, 20.
109. SCS, vol. VIII, no. 62.
110. For Naikwadi see ibid vol. IV, nos. 742–6 for instance.
111. P. M. Joshi, 'Adilshahi Administration' in *Transactions of All India History Congress*, 1940, p. 10. G. H. Khare, *Shiva Charitra Vritt Sangrah*, op. cit., vol. II, p. 84.
112. SCS, vol. I, no. 22; vol. II, nos. 12, 357, 358; vol. III, nos. 10, 74; vol. V, nos. 74, 77, 136.
113. PSIH, vol. V, no. 96.

114. Ibid., vol. III, no. 57; vol. V, nos. 77–80.
115. Ibid., vol. V, nos. 67–73, 85–7.
116. Ibid., vol. V, nos. 54–94.
117. Ibid., vol. V, nos. 52, 61.
118. Vide H. G. Rawlinson (ed.), *Source Book of Maratha History*, Bombay, 1929, vol. I, p. 98.
119. PSIH, vol. III, no. 88.
120. PSIH, vol. V, no. 96.
121. Ibid., vol. III, no. 40.
122. SCS, vol. I, no. 22; vol. II, nos. 12, 357, 358; vol. III, nos. 10, 74; vol. V, nos. 74, 77, 136.
123. PSIH, vol. V, no. 59. 'dar istihakami va mazbuti-qalah va maamuri va abadani-i-vilayat sargarm va sabit qadam bashad'.
124. Ibid., vol. II, no. 21; vol. V, nos. 74, 77, 85, 91, 92, 95, 97.
125. Ibid., vol. I, no. 11; vol. V, no. 58.
126. Ibid., vol. V, no. 77.
127. Ibid., vol. V, no. 64.
128. SCS, vol. II, no. 341. PSIH, vol. V, no. 64. V. T. Gune, *Judicial System of the Marathas*, op. cit., pp. 23–5.
129. PSIH, vol. III, no. 37; vol. V, nos. 68, 70, 71, 76, 78, 79, 80, 81.
130. Ibid., vol. V, nos. 54, 134.
131. Ibid., vol. V, nos. 56, 66.
132. Ibid., vol. V, no. 68.
133. SCS, vol. XI, no. 96, p. 66.
134. PSIH, vol. V, no. 55.
135. Ibid., vol. V, no. 96.
136. PSIH, vol. V, no. 98.
137. Ibid., vol. I, no. 38; vol. III, nos. 69 (see also its footnote), 75.
138. These three kinds of cavalry-men may be defined as follows: *shillahdar*, one who equipped himself with horse and arms and supported several followers on his own account; *lashkari-afrad*, one who armed himself with horse and arms on his own account and moved singly without becoming a member of any particular cavalry-regiment; and *lashkari*, one who equipped himself with horse and arms and joined a certain cavalry-regiment.
139. e.g. PSIH, vol. III, nos. 36, 38, 43, 46, 49, 58, 60–2.
140. Ibid., vol. III, no. 40.
141. Ibid., vol. III, no. 53.
142. Ibid., vol. V, no. 112.
143. Ibid., vol. III, no. 63.

144. Ibid., vol. v, no. 69.
145. Ibid., vol. v, no. 77.
146. Ibid., vol. v, no. 108.
147. Ibid., vol. III, no. 78.
148. Ibid., vol. v, no. 138.
149. Ibid., vol. v, no. 138. The clerks of these central departments were often *jointly* given a village as their fief.
150. Ibid., vol. v, no. 95.
151. Ibid., vol. III, nos. 54, 57.
152. Ibid., vol. III, nos. 45, 54, 63.
153. Ibid., vol. III, no. 48.
154. Ibid., vol. III, no. 78; SCS, vol. v, nos., 36, 38.
155. PSIH, vol. v, no. 138.
156. SCS, vol. IV, no. 716.
157. PSIH, vol. v, no. 69.
158. SCS, vol. XI, no. 96.
159. Ibid., vol. XI, no. 96.
160. Ibid., vol. IV, no. 716.
161. Ibid., vol. IV, no. 716.
162. Ibid., vol. II , no. 323; vol. IX, no. 64.
163. Ibid., vol. VI, no. 37; vol. XI, no. 66. PSIH, vol. III, nos. 44, 48, 63, 78.
164. SCS, vol. VI, nos. 16, 18.
165. Some *desais* who especially distinguished themselves in service were also given this fief. PSIH, vol. II, nos. 11, 12; vol. III, no. 6; vol. v, nos. 51, 106.
166. Ibid., vol. III, no. 75; vol. v, nos. 41, 72, 86, 89, 90, 98.
167. Ibid., vol. II, no. 12; vol. III, no. 28.
168. Ibid., vol. II, nos. 11, 12.
169. Ibid., vol. v, no. 87.
170. Ibid., vol. III, no. 35.
171. Ibid., vol. v, no. 88.
172. Ibid., vol. III, nos. 10, 26; vol. v, nos. 91, 128, 138.
173. Ibid., vol. III, no. 69; vol. v, nos. 51, 99.
174. Ibid., vol. v, no. 119.
175. SCS, vol. VI, pp. 60–8.
176. PSIH, vol. II, nos. 11, 12; vol. III, no. 26.
177. e.g. Shahaji Bhonsle's fief of Poona, Supa and Indapur Parganas, and Ghorpade's fief of *pargana* Mudhol.
178. PSIH, vol. III, no. 88.

179. P. M. Joshi, 'Adilshahi Administration', op. cit., p. 7. D. V. Apte (ed.), *Mudhol Sansthanacha Ghorpade Gharanyacha Itihas*, Poona, 1934, pp. 22–59.
180. e.g. G. H. Khare, *Shiva Charitra Vritt Sangrah*, vol. II, Poona, 1939.
181. PSIH, vol. III, nos. 10, 26, 28; vol. V, nos. 41, 50, 89, 91, 138.
182. SCS, vol. VIII, nos. 44, 70.
183. SCS, vol. VIII, no. 45.
184. Ibid., vol. I, no. 45.
185. Ibid., vol. IV, nos. 742–6.
186. Ibid., vol. IV, no. 721; vol. VIII, no. 70.
187. Ibid., vol. VI, pp. 66–8.
188. Ibid., vol. VIII, no. 70; vol. IV, no. 721.
189. Ibid., vol. III, no. 444.
190. Ibid., vol. I, no. 45.
191. Ibid., vol. VIII, no. 45.
192. Ibid., vol. VIII, no. 44.
193. Ibid., vol. I, no. 45.
194. Ibid., vol. IV, nos. 744–6.
195. Ibid., vol. VIII, no. 45.
196. PSIH, vol. I, nos. 11–13.
197. SCS, vol. I, no. 40; vol. II, nos. 207, 268; vol. III, nos. 526 etc.; vol. IV, no. 719; vol. VI, nos. 57, 60, 62, 63; vol. VIII, no. 25.
198. PSIH, vol. I, no. 29. SCS, vol. III, No, 526 etc.; vol. VI, no. 63.
199. PSIH, vol. I, nos. 11–13. SCS, vol. II, no. 267; vol. III, nos. 43, 526ff; vol. VIII, no. 24.
200. e.g. SCS, vol. I, no. 40; vol. IV, no. 699; vol. VII, no. 1; vol. VIII, no. 66,
201. PSIH, vol. III, nos. 26, 91, 92; vol. V, nos. 109, 111.
202. Ibid., vol. I, nos. 24, 25; vol. V, nos. 50, 101.
203. Ibid., vol. III, no. 26.
204. SCS, vol. III, nos. 28, 526, 538, 539, 542, 545, 546, 550; vol. IV, no. 721; vol. VI, no. 60; vol. VII, no. 39; vol. VIII, no. 24.
205. Ibid., vol. III, nos. 526, 528, 545; vol. VII, no. 39.
206. PSIH, vol. I, nos. 19, 20.
207. SCS, vol. IV, no. 722.
208. Ibid., vol. VIII, no. 70. This *patil*, however, complained of the injustice to the succeeding fief-holder and got all of his office restored to him by an assembly of justice.

CHAPTER 2: MUGHAL RULE IN THE DECCAN DURING THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY— THE JAGIR SYSTEM AND ITS DECAY*

I. INTRODUCTION

Pre-British India experienced only three stable political regimes which put, for a considerable length of time, major portions of the sub-continent under a single united control. First came the Maurya empire (from the beginning of the fourth century BC to the end of the second century BC), then the Gupta empire (from the early fourth century AD to the mid-sixth century AD), and lastly the Mughal empire (from the early sixteenth century to the mid-nineteenth century). It has been pointed out that there were great differences between the Maurya and the Gupta empires as regards the system of politico-economic rule. The former was a highly centralized bureaucratic state, while the latter witnessed the nascent movement towards 'feudalization' in the inchoate endowment of lands or areas to the aristocrats and bureaucrats. (In earlier periods lands had of course been granted to the holy orders.) It has been argued that this tendency towards 'feudalism' reached its zenith in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries,[1] when the Muslim invasion and conquest took place.

Historical researches into 'Muslim India' (from the early thirteenth to the early eighteenth century) remain rudimentary, excepting the politico-economic exploration which has gained

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momentum recently.[2] However, we have good reason to believe that in the process of the Muslim invasion and conquest, the aristocrats and high officials of the Hindu dynasties further strengthened the tendency to disperse and localize themselves so as to eventually become local overlords. Some studies in local history have actually shown this process.[3] Irrespective of their origins, the Muslim rulers began to call these various local overlords *zamindars*, a Persian expression which means land-holders. During the British period, the *zamindari* system went through radical changes. It was legally abolished by the land reform acts after the Independence, but remnants of it still survive. We shall have occasion to review briefly some aspects of the *zamindari* system during Mughal rule.

Movements towards political unification of the entire sub-continent took place throughout ancient and medieval India, but the results achieved were mostly short-lived, excepting the three empires mentioned above. However, we need not go into the details of all these.

The Mughal empire was the last glory of 'Muslim India' and it has since crucially affected the historical course of this sub-continent. The empire was firmly established in the reign of the third emperor Akbar (1556–1605); then it prospered under the three succeeding emperors: Jahangir (1605–27), Shah Jahan (1628–58) and Aurangzeb (1658–1707). However, the empire began to disintegrate in the early eighteenth century; and by the mid-eighteenth century, although still retaining the name of empire, it was reduced to a small local power confined in and around Delhi. The Sepoy Mutiny dealt the final blow to the Mughal empire, after which it disappeared completely.

Akbar chose Agra as the capital of the empire. He then conquered the northern and eastern India, and turned the area into a directly-administered territory in the late sixteenth century. At the same time he allowed the Hindu kingdoms in Rajasthan to continue as subordinate states. Later, he marched southwards and conquered the Muslim kingdom in Gujarat, and turned it into a directly-administered territory of the empire. Part of the Deccan kingdoms was next merged into the empire. In those

days, there were three powerful Muslim kingdoms in the Deccan: the Nizamshahi with its capital at Ahmadnagar, the Qutabshahi with its capital at Golconda, and the Adilshahi with its capital at Bijapur. The greatest ambition of the three succeeding emperors after Akbar was to conquer these three Deccan kingdoms. Emperor Jahangir attacked the Nizamshahi several times but failed to subdue it. Only in 1636 this kingdom was defeated by Shah Jahan and absorbed into the Mughal empire. After that, the emperor appointed his son, prince Aurangzeb, as the governor of the newly acquired territory, and ordered the prince to continue the military campaign against the remaining two Muslim kingdoms. Aurangzeb, after ascending the throne, shifted the capital to the Deccan, and waged continuous wars, for 30 years, against these two kingdoms. Eventually these were subdued and turned into directly-administered territory of the empire in 1686–7.[5] However, as we shall see later, the resistance of the Maratha people under the leadership of Shivaji gained in strength at the western corner of the Deccan, and this prevented Aurangzeb from putting the Deccan under his complete control.

The administrative system of the Mughal empire, based to a great extent on those of the foregoing Muslim kingdoms, was established during the reign of Akbar. In his time the empire was divided into twelve (later on increased to fifteen) provinces (*subahs*), and each *subah* was divided into several districts (*sarkars*). A district contained several *parganas* or *mahals* which pre-existed. The emperor appointed one governor (*sipah salar* or *subahdar*, later on called *nazim* or *navab*), one finance minister (*dewan*), one pay master (*bakhshi*) and other bureaucratic staffs to every *subah*. Similarly, the emperor appointed for every district one city administrator (*kotwal*), one military commander (*faujdar*), one tax collector (*amalguzar*, *amil*), and other officers. And each *pargana* had its administrator (*shiqdar*), a tax collector (*amil*), an assessment officer (*amin*), and other government officers. It should also be noted that each *pargana* had a hereditary head (*chaudhuri* in northern and eastern India, *deshmukh* or *desai* in the Deccan), hereditary accountant (*qanungo* in northern and eastern India, *deshpande* in the Deccan). And the villages

in the *pargana* had local officers such as hereditary village head (*muqaddam*—in the Deccan he was also called *patil*) and hereditary village accountant (*patwari-kulkarni* in the Deccan).[6]

Although, in the seventeenth century, some modifications occurred in the denominations of the state officers and also in the administrative systems themselves, the basic structure of them remained more or less the same from Akbar's time till the early eighteenth century. As the Mughal rule extended to the Deccan, six new provinces (*subahs*) were created and almost the same administrative sytems as referred to above were introduced there. One of the characteristics of the Mughal bureaucracy was that there was a separate set of officers mainly specialized in the assessment and collection of land revenue; there were others who were concerned with military affairs, police and the law and order. And these two sets of officers were in principle functionally differentiated from each other.

In this way, the Mughal empire established a highly centralized bureaucratic state, not in appearance only, but also to some extent in substance. However, this centralized bureaucratic state had some contradictory elements in it. First, as we have already seen, there were local overlords of various importance in many regions and they were generally called *zamindars*. We shall come back to this point later. Second, office fiefs (*jagirs*) were created all over the directly-administered territories. These *jagirs* were assigned to the bureaucrats as their main remuneration and they were frequently shifted at short intervals of a few years.

A brief account of the Mughal bureaucracy and state system follows. First, excepting the clerical staffs at the offices of the centre, provinces, districts and *parganas*, all the bureaucrats appointed by the emperor at the recommendation of aristocrats or high officials were given 'rank' (*mansab*). This rank was denoted by the numbers of men (*zat*) and horses (*sawar*) that went with a post. Thus a bureaucrat might be given a rank with, say, '500 *zat* and 100 *sawar*'. And his remuneration was determined according to these numbers. *Zat* showed the scale of an officer's personal remuneration and *sawar* indicated the size of the cavalry he was to maintain at his own cost. The lowest

bureaucrats started with ten cavalry soldiers (later increased to twenty) and the highest rank included as many as 5,000. Second, there were two forms of remuneration to the bureaucrats. One was the cash payment from treasury (*khazana*) of the central or provincial governments. The other was the assignment of office fief, the holder of which could claim the revenues from assigned land for an uncertain length of time. Corresponding to these two forms of remuneration, the directly-administered territory of the empire was divided into 'state treasury land' (*khalsa, khassa-i-sharifa*) and 'office fiefs'. The imperial administrative institution explained above took direct charge of the 'state treasury land', and they only exercised indirect general control over the 'office fiefs'.[7] Third, it should be specially noted that the great majority of the directly-administered territories of the empire was given out as office fiefs. According to Professor Irfan Habib, after the abortive attempt made in 1574 at abolishing the *jagir* system and converting the whole of directly-administered territory of the empire into 'the state treasury land', Akbar was obliged to revive it (the *jagir* system) and the central government retained in 1596 only 25 per cent of the total land revenue in three north Indian provinces. Professor Habib further showed that the proportion of the land revenue retained by the state dwindled to as low as below 5 per cent in the reign of Jahangir, and Shah Jahan's financial reforms enhanced the rate to only 7–14 per cent. However, it reached 20 per cent under Aurangzeb in about 1667.[8]

The remaining part of the empire was not wholly distributed to the bureaucrats as fiefs. Emperor, *jagirdars*, and local overlords granted various types of tax-free lands to religious scholars, medical doctors, persons with distinguished services, and to temples and educational institutions. However, as these various grants in total amounted to no more than 2 to 5 per cent of the land revenue,[9] we may conclude that 70 to 90 per cent of the directly-administered territory of the empire was assigned to the bureaucrats as fiefs.

These considerations convince us that, although the Mughal empire presented an appearance of a highly centralized bureau-

cratic state, it contained many contradictory factors that tended towards decentralization of the state powers, and that the fief system occupied a very important position in the Mughal politico-economic system.

A group of Indian historians has been exploring the politico-economic history of the Mughal period in the last ten years or so. Their researches have unearthed much information about the agrarian conditions. A brief summary of the findings follows. There were two types of villages in the Mughal India: one was 'the peasant village' which contained no local overlord families[10] and the other was 'the landlord village', which had local overlord families living in the locality. Even in 'the peasant villages', class differentiation was already observable between the landowning 'independent farmers' (*khudkasht raiyat, riaya*) and 'the tenant farmers' (*muzarian*).[11] Among the local overlords (*zamindars*), at least three types were distinguishable: first, subordinate Hindu kings, or holders of extensive territories; second, 'intermediate local overlords' who possessed considerable lands in the localities and acted as the hereditary local officers such as hereditary chiefs and accountants of the *parganas* and the village heads, who were held responsible for the collection of land revenues from the *parganas* and villages, and who also took charge of the law and order; third, small local overlords who possessed a few villages or part of a village.[12] The landowning 'independent farmers' were also sometimes called the *zamindars*.[13]

In keeping with this recent trend in historical researches, Professor Habib devoted a chapter in *The Agrarian System of Mughal India* (1963) to the study of the 'fief (*jagir*)' system. After defining the *jagir* system as a system of 'revenue assignment' and explaining its general features in some detail, he argued that this 'revenue assignment' system with its irregular shift at the interval of a few years strengthened the exploitation of peasantry by the fief-holders and thereby provoked, in many parts of the empire, local resistance led by local hereditary overlords, and that this system was the main cause of the disintegration of the Mughal empire.[14]

Recent studies in the politico-economic history of Mughal

India have expectedly concentrated on northern India, the heartland of the empire. No well documented study on the *jagir* system in the Deccan, which was the main target of the imperial conquest during the seventeenth century, has yet appeared—barring the casual references to it by Professor Habib and others.

The present author has been studying the historical development of the polity, economy, and society in the Deccan from the early sixteenth to the end of the nineteenth century. The *jagir* system is one of the most important administrative institutions of the Mughals in the seventeenth century Deccan, and the present study of this system is based on Persian sources. A reconstruction of the formal structure of this institution will first be attempted, followed by an examination of the process of its decay under the pressures of internal contradictions and external circumstances. It is hoped that this will enable us to partly understand the financial causes of the fall of the Mughal empire; it may also enable us to see clearly the processes and conditions of the rise of the Maratha powers at their early stages. Although the conclusions reached in the present study may be more or less the same as those of Professor Habib who based his researches primarily on the north Indian conditions, the present author would like to ascertain them under the conditions then prevailing in the Deccan.

This study is based on about thirty contemporary letters in Persian, contained in three volumes of documents selected and edited by Dr Y. H. Khan,[15] the Dean of the Faculty of History, Osmania University. Dr Khan selected these letters from among 20 million documents preserved at the archives of the former princely state of Hyderabad. These documents consist mostly of diaries (*siyaha huzur*) of the office of the provincial governor, imperial order, the local administrative order (*parwancha*), estimates (*siyaha daul, daul*) of *jagir* revenues prepared by the deputy under the direction of the provincial pay master, and the memorandum (*yaddasht*) of various documents prepared by the record officer (*waqiahnavis*).[17] In addition to these documents, we have also drawn on the news (*waqai*) prepared by the news reporter (*waqainavis*) who were deputed to various

provinces in order to collect local information and submit them to the emperor through provincial governors. We have also taken into account the local news (*waqai*) which was directly communicated to the emperor by many royal spies (*sawaneh-nigar*) who were secretly sent into various parts of the empire.[18]

II. STRUCTURE OF OFFICE FIEFS

As an example of the records we depend on, a local administrative order (*parwancha*) of assignment of *jagir* to an officer under the date of 29th, 6th Month 1045 Hijri Year (30th November AD 1635) will be translated below. Numbers put at the head of each paragraph and the words written in the brackets are added by the present author.

Local Administrative Orders

(1) It was confirmed as follows on the holy 30th, 8th month,[19] the 8th regnal year (of Shah Jahan). Under the sanction (*zimn*) (of his Majesty), an amount of 220,000 *dams*[20] was assigned to brave swearer Quraish Beg as *jagir* in *pargana* Khari Dhamuni, district Basam, province Berar from the beginning of the harvest of Kharif in the 8th regnal year. *Deshmukhs, deshpandes, muqaddams, riaya* and *muzarian* of the said *mahal* are ordered to accept the above person as the *jagirdar* of the above sum, and are to be faithfully held responsible (*jawab guftah*) to the agents (*gumashthae*) of the said person for the payment of land revenue and other impositions (*malvajbi va haquq-i-dewani*) so that there should arise no deficits (*qasir*) or refusals (*munkar*). And let the agents collect (*bardasht shudah bashad*) the harvest belonging to the *jagirdar* (*fasl-i-mutaaliqa-i-mazkur*) from the assigned *mahal* (*mahal-i-jagir*). When he resigns from the office, let him return the rights of collection (*an-ra bad vazhaqqut-tahsil-bazgardanidah ba-dahanand*).

(2) Agents of the *jagirdars* are hereby ordered to make efforts and give special attention to satisfy the peasants (*riaya*) and people in general (*barayai*) so as to make them eagerly culti-

vate (*ziraat*) and settle (*imarat*), and thereby bring prosperity (*abadani*) and welfare (*mamuri*) to the locality. The said agents should strictly abide by this order and never commit exactions nor deviations.

(3) An estimate (*daul*) concerning the amount (*muqarrar*) of *jagir* having royal confirmation in favour of Quraish Beg with rank (*mansab*) of 300 men (*zat*) and 100 horses (*sawar*) was sent to the governor Khan-e Zaman for his signature.

Cavalry (*nafar*) 100 confirmed total amount
1,243,000 *dams*.

(Items) Proper remuneration (*muwafiq-i-tankhwah*)—
1,023,000 *dams*.

Suspension of payment for a quarter of cavalry
(25 horsemen)—220,000 *dams*.

Explanation of the confirmed remuneration (*maqarrara-i-tankhwah basharh-i-zail*)

Total amount—1,243,000 *dams*.

According to the current regulation—1,023,000 *dams*.

(Items) 447,700 *dams* from *pargana* Bir, province of the Dekan.

575,300 *dams* from *pargana* Khari Dhamuni, province of Berar.

Now an addition of 220,000 *dams* was made as the expense (*iwaz*) of a quarter of the horses. In place of Bhadur Khan, it was confirmed that (an additional) payment of 220,000 *dams* would be made from *pargana* Khari Dhamuni, district Basam.

(4) Letter of oath (*sharh-i-tamassuk*) confirmed on the last day of 6th Month 1045 Hijri;—'I, Quraish Beg, a courtier of his Majesty, swear in as follows. 'I shall take the assigned number of horses (to the office) for branding after two months. If I fail to do so, it is the deviation from the obligation concerning the *jagir* which I have been holding for the maintenance of a quarter (of the horses). I write down the above in accordance with the form of the official letter (*sanad*).'

(5) Provincial pay master (*bakhshi-ul-mulki*) Kazam Khan (wrote) a letter of confirmation with his signature.

(6) A copy (*naqal*) was sent to the record room (*daftar*) with the grace of the god on the 11th Azar, the holy 8th regnal year (Persian Year).

(7) The governor Khan-e Zaman accordingly put a signature on a letter ordering the payment of harvest of Kharif of the 12th year (*tanguzil*), or the 8th regnal year.[21]

A 'local administrative order' usually contained duplicates of various official documents related to the matter. And generally neither the names of the addressers, nor those of the addressees would be mentioned on these documents. The documents translated above reveal as follows. (1) One middle class bureaucrat with the rank of 300 men and 100 horses was assigned *jagirs* with the annual total income of 1,243,000 *dams* (about Rupees 30,000). (2) However, he failed to appear with the fixed number of horses at the place of branding. Shortfall was 25 out of 100 horses. (3) Consequently, 220,000 *dams* were deducted from his original remuneration. (4) He, thereupon, promised to appear with 25 horses after two months and was allowed to receive the reduced 220,000 *dams*. He was thus given *jagir* equivalent to this sum in certain *parganas*. The order of the dates of documents in 'the local administration order' will be as follows. Document (3) was first prepared and submitted to the governor of the province and the pay master. Whereupon directions contained in documents (5) & (7) were issued. The *jagirdar* then submitted the letter of oath (document (4)) to the governor, and the latter gave order (1) to the hereditary local officers and people of the locality, and (2) to the agents of the *jagirdar*. And lastly, the clerk put down the memorandum marked as document (6).

The records presented above show some interesting points regarding the office fiefs (*jagir*). First, *deshmukh*, *deshpande*, *muqaddam* and other local hereditary officers and peasants were 'held responsible' for the payment of the prescribed amount of money. Second, the *jagirdars* managed their *jagir* through the agents who were sent into the localities and collected the remuneration of their masters. Third, remuneration was clearly indicated as the 'land revenue and impositions'[22] to be collected by the government. The assignees of the *jagir* were not in principle

allowed to collect more than the fixed amounts due to the government.

Who were these 'agents'? And how did the government keep a check on these agents as to whether any exactions were made by them? What kinds of control could the *jagirdars* exercise over the fiefs under the given framework of the government administration?

As already mentioned, *jagirs* of the Mughal empire were liable to change hands at short and irregular intervals. This was enforced in order to prevent *jagirdars* from becoming full-fledged local overlords, and this consideration also led to the assignment of *jagirs* in more or less distant corners of the country from the place of their services. For example, the emperor rejected an officer's appeal for the withdrawal of an order to transfer him because the transfer would make it difficult for him to manage his *jagir*.[23]

In a situation like this, a *jagirdar* would manage his *jagir* through sending his agent to the locality; the agent would also collect his master's remuneration. Who were these 'agents'? First, most of them were not Muslim outsiders, but Hindus selected from among those who were conversant with the conditions of the respective localities. For example, the Deccan governor, prince Aurangzeb, possessed twenty-five *parganas* scattered all over the Deccan as his *jagirs* with the total annual income of 110,350,000 *dams* (about Rupees 2,700,000), and he appointed ten collectors (*karori*) to manage them in 1664. Judging by their surnames, all of these *karoris* were Hindus of the merchant castes.[24] Second, resident managers (*thanahdars*) were appointed to principal villages in the *jagir*.[25] It seems that both the *karoris* and *thanahdars* were generally called agents (*gumashthae*). The *jagirdar* could send troops to the *jagir* to give lessons to the refractory elements, if necessary.[26] The *jagirdar* himself sometimes took leave (*rukhsat*) of his office in order to manage the *jagir* for a short time, say, three months.[27]

Our sources do not contain references to any case of a *jagirdar* farming out (*ijara, uhda*) the management of a *jagir* to an outsider, nor does it contain any instance of a *jagirdar* giving out

his *jagir* to his subjects by way of subinfeudation.[28] In short, the *jagirdars* managed their *jagirs* by sending resident managers such as the *karoris* and *thanahdars* into the fiefs, by sending troops if necessary, and also by visiting the *jagirs* themselves from time to time.

How did the imperial government keep a check on the management of the fiefs as described above? First, as mentioned earlier, the bureaucrats of provinces, districts and *parganas*, whose immediate responsibility was to control and manage the 'state treasury lands' within their jurisdictions, were also expected indirectly to exercise general supervision over the internal management of *jagirs* within their jurisdictions.[29] Second, imperial spies and news reporters were sent into the localities and they reported the local conditions to the emperor. Third, the provincial finance ministers would sometimes depute officers (*mutsaddi*) on special duty into the districts for investigating the state of affairs concerning settlement and collection of land-revenue of each *pargana*. Such officers would also collect related documents signed by *deshmukhs* and *deshpandes*. To prevent 'the *jagirdar* from oppressing the peasant' so that the peasants might diligently cultivate the fields[30] would sometimes be a responsibility of these officers.

Under such control and supervision of the central government, the *jagirdars* were expected to obtain the consent of the government settlement officers (*amin*) in the *pargana*, before any 'settlement of land revenue (*jamabandi*)'[31] was made; they were also required to submit reports to the provincial pay master concerning 'actual collection (*hal-i-hasil*)' of the year.[32]

These discussions lead us to conclude that the *jagirdari* system was nothing but an 'assignment of land-revenue'. The *jagirdars* do not appear to have any right of inflicting punishments on the people residing in their fiefs. For example, when two persons residing in a *jagir* raided a cloth-merchant and injured him, the *thanahdar* of the *jagirdar* caught the culprits and their families and handed them over to the nearest government fort; the recovered clothes were sent to the provincial finance minister.[33] In another incident, when the commanding officer of a fort arres-

ted a refractory local lord and his followers within his *jagir*, he simply detained them in the fort under his charge without inflicting any punishments on them.[34]

However, we should not overlook an important privilege of the *jagirdar*. That was a 'right of immunity' by which he could refuse permission to a government officer to enter and make investigation in his fief. For example, an officer serving in the district of Ramgir complained to the head officer of the district that the government collector and the *pargana* accountant had ordered the 'village accountants in my *jagir*' (*kulkarniyan-i-mahal-i-jagir-i-man*) to appear at the government office with documents for the past three years. The aggrieved officer added that no *jagirdars* of the district had ever been treated in that way. The head officer of the district made enquiry into the matter and concluded that the said collector and the *pargana* accountant had acted improperly (*namaqul*). Therefore he ordered the *jagirdar* to prepare a report himself on the collection of land-revenue in his *jagir* and submit that report directly to the district authority.[35]

So long as the *jagirdars* were allowed the 'right of immunity', the general supervision of the imperial government over the *jagirs* remained more or less nominal, for the reports on collection, which the *jagirdars* were obliged to prepare and submit to the authorities of the province or district annually, could be deceitful. Thus, apart from collecting the prescribed land revenue, the *jagirdars* had ample scope for indulging in unauthorized extractions. And in fact our records show instances of deterioration of the office fief system in the latter half of the seventeenth century. In the next section, this aspect of the fief system is examined.

III. DETERIORATION OF THE FIEF SYSTEM

There were other important causes than the scope for unauthorized exactions for the deterioration of the fief system; the rapid increase in the number of bureaucrats who were entitled to receive the fiefs also aggravated the situations in the seventeenth century. Table 1 shows that the number of bureaucrats having

TABLE 1: Number of Rank-holders

	Akbar's Reign	*Jahangir's Reign*	*Shah Jahan's Reign*	
High-class (500 to 5000 horses)	249	439	563	
Middle-class (200 to 400 horses)	163	438	?	
Low-class (10 to 150 horses)	1,388	2,064	?	
Total	1,800	2,941	8,000	(Those above 20 horses only)

ranks (*mansab*) increased by more than 300 per cent in the reign of Shah Jahan, compared to Akbar's time.[36] In order to provide the increasing rank-holders with fiefs it became inevitable to reduce the remuneration of the fief-holders. During Shah Jahan's reign a policy of reducing the actual payment by 3 to 10 months' portion of the annual remuneration was adopted.[37] Besides that, the same locality was sometimes simultaneously assigned as fief to more than one bureaucrat. For example, news (*waqai*) under the date of 12 May 1661 reported that a *pargana*, which had already been assigned to two brothers as a joint-fief, was re-assigned to another bureaucrat who sent his agents into the locality and made them collect additional impositions (*vajih-i-zawaid*). Thereupon clashes took place between the two parties and several people were killed and injured.[38] Another *waqai* (news) of 25 May 1661 also recorded that a *pargana* which was the fief of a bureaucrat was forcibly usurped by another bureaucrat on the pretext that it was newly given to him.[39] Still another 'news' of the same year shows that a bureaucrat was given a fief within a fief which had already been assigned to some other bureaucrat.[40]

To make up for the deficiencies in the fiefs, the government appointed bureaucrats as the revenue farmers (*uhdahdar*) in the *parganas* Kalyan and Sangamner, which were only recently conquered from the Maratha powers, in around 1660.[41] Even-

more, a newly recruited high class bureaucrat with a rank of 1,000 men and 500 horses was given a *jagir* 'which will be granted only when Shivaji's territories in Parenda area are placed under the conqueror's dynasty (the Mughal empire).'[42]

Under such stringent conditions, a document of 1662 shows that the emperor refused to appoint four persons as imperial bureaucrats,[43] even though they were recommended by the provincial governor according to the prevailing custom. However, the suspension of the appointment of new bureaucrats could not last long. The Mughal emperor had to continue wars against the two Muslim kingdoms in the Deccan; he also had to take necessary measures to suppress the strenuous resistance made by the Maratha powers. Then he had to accommodate those generals of the enemy kingdoms who expressed their desire to abandon their kingdoms and join the Mughal army. The Mughals were in a way compelled to take them into imperial service, one by one. To cope with the situation, the emperor laid down a new regulation that the remuneration of the newly appointed generals would be automatically reduced by a quarter.[44]

These circumstances naturally resulted, on the one hand, in the general deterioration of the fief system and, on the other, in the refusal of fiefs by the bureaucrats, who instead asked for payment in money of their remuneration directly from the imperial treasury. Our records do not contain direct reference to this latter point, but the fact that in the early years of Aurangzeb's reign state treasury land (*khalsa*) extended to as large as twenty per cent of the entire land seems to suggest the scale of the refusal of fiefs by the bureaucrants. However, the financial base of the empire was too weak to comply with such claims. Therefore, the emperor adopted a policy of prohibiting the payment in money of remuneration from the imperial treasury and of forcing the bureaucrats to accept fiefs. One record of 3 July 1667 says: 'After the departure of Mauhammad Ashraf (and Muhammad Akbar), sons of Abdula Sirazi, to the Deccan, our holy Majesty issued the following strict order. "Why did the officers in the Deccan give the brothers remuneration in cash, while they were expected to be assigned fiefs, as was the case with their father, Abdula

Sirazi? Hereby the pay master Safi Khan is ordered to report the circumstance. He is also directed not to give remuneration in money to the officers who, with imperial confirmation, were appointed to the offices in the Deccan. They should be given fiefs." '[45]

In this way, increase in the number of imperial bureaucrats, deficiency and double-assignment of the fiefs, exhaustion of the state treasury and forcible assignment of the fiefs proceeded side by side.

Under these circumstances, the local overlords (*zamindars*) began to resist the Mughal authority in various parts of the Deccan. Let us take some examples. Some news (*waqai*) of January 1662 reported the resistance of a *zamindar* and his followers in a fief, who were arrested and confined within a fort.[46] Another *waqai* of May 1662 recorded the resistance of a *zamindar* of some other *pargana* against the head officer of the district and they made peace only after clashes in which several persons were killed and injured.[47] According to another *waqai* at more or less the same time a *zamindar* in a fief rose in arms and, after fighting with an imperial troop who were dispatched to suppress him, fled away into the mountains.[48]

In addition to such resistances by *zamindars*, it was the activities of the Maratha powers that drove the Mughals to the wall and thereby further deteriorated the fief system. This together pushed the Mughal administrative system into disintegration. A *waqai* of November 1661 reported that Shivaji's infantry amounting to 1,000 appeared and collected taxes in the *pargana* Junnar.[49] Another *waqai* records the occupation of the said *pargana* by 2,000 Maratha infantry.[50] Another record of January 1662 said that a Mughal troop attacked 'the followers of evil enemy' who were reported to reside in the villages of Lohagad area. They burnt down 70 to 80 villages and carried away food-grains. They further pursued the villagers of the locality fleeing with their cattle and household goods into the hills and captured 1,000 cattle and 300 men and put fires on the neighbouring villages.[51] On the other hand, the Marathas raided the imperial territories repeatedly and waged guerilla wars. For example, a defence officer

of Udgir fort reported as follows. 'In the *pargana* Udgir, because of constant clashes between the army of victory (the Mughal army) and the evil enemy, all the peasants have fled away for these two years, and, therefore, no goods are available here. We cannot even take loans.' He further added, 'As the Marathas threatened the inhabitants that should they refuse to pay a quarter of the land-revenue to them, they would desolate the locality,' and the inhabitants, including even the merchants (*sahukaran*), fled to Telanga.[52] In another record, a defence officer of Ausa fort wrote that the 'army of the evil enemy appeared near the town of Ausa with the intention of looting. As fortunately we could defeat them, they failed to raid the town and fort. However, their very existence completely ruined the fief. They are still hovering round.'[53] Another bureaucrat reported that '(The Maratha army) conquered and usurped my entire fief. I request the dispatch of goods. I am entitled to collect Rs 17,000 from the fief. However, I can get none. I have to maintain my followers and family. I, therefore, ask you to assign me a different fief of equivalent value in the *pargana* Ambar Roshangaon.'[54]

Confusion and desolation of the fief system in the Deccan, thus further deepened.

IV. CONCLUSION

After the death of Aurangzeb in 1707, the Mughal empire started disintegrating. The provincial governors, though they remained apparently loyal, moved towards becoming independent. The Marathas conquered extensive areas from the central and northern India, and established a great confederacy with the headquarters at Pune. In Punjab, the Sikhs established their own state, and the Jats and Rajputs repeatedly rose in arms near Delhi.[55] The disintegration of the Mughal empire may be attributed mainly to the following causes. First, the absence of any regular principle for royal succession that resulted in bloody wars among the princes with their respective factions in the aristocratic and bureaucratic orders. Second, the relationship between the emperor and the bureaucrats was based neither on

the principle of favour and subjection, nor on any strong feeling of loyalty. It was rather a pragmatic combination between the emperor and those who came from West Asia to India in quest of private fortunes. A relation such as this between the emperor and his subjects may certainly be mentioned as one of the important factors that led to the disintegration and fall of the empire.[56] Third, among the other crucial factors were no doubt the deterioration of the fief system, the resistance of local lords and the consequent financial crises. We may conclude that the fall of the Mughal empire started in the Deccan in the reign of Aurangzeb.

NOTES

1. D. D. Kosambi, *The Culture and Civilization of Ancient India in Historical Outline*, London, 1965, chaps. v–vi. R. S. Sharma, *Indian Feudalism: c. 300–1200*, Calcutta, 1965, chaps. i–vii. R. Coulborn, 'Feudalism, Brahminism and the Intrusion of Islam upon Indian History', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. x, NR. 3, Mouton, April 1968, pp. 356–74.
2. About the major works on Muslim India, see my book review: H. Fukazawa, 'Professor Irfan Habib's *The Agrarian System of Mughal India (1556–1707)*', *The Hitotsubashi Review*, vol. 51, no. 5, 1964, p. 97, footnote no. 1.
3. For example, my article: Fukazawa, 'Big Land-holding in Nineteenth Century British Gujarat' in Fukazawa (1972) (in Japanese).
4. W. H. Moreland, *The Agrarian System of Moslem India*, Allahabad, 1929, pp. 8, 18, etc.
5. Cf. chap. i, pp. 1, 2, 6.
6. Chap. i, pp. 26–32. P. Saran, *The Provincial Government of the Mughals (1526–1658)*, Allahabad, 1941, pp. 281–96.
7. P. Saran, op. cit. J. N. Sarkar, *Mughal Administration*, 4th ed., Calcutta, 1952.
8. I. Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India*, Bomaby, 1963, pp. 271–3.
9. Ibid., p. 314.
10. Ibid., p. 141.
11. B. R. Grover, 'Nature of Land-Rights in Mughal India', *The*

Indian Economic and Social History Review (Delhi), vol. 1, no. 1, July–Sept. 1963, pp. 2–6.

12. S. N. Hasan, 'The Position of the Zamindars in the Mughal Empire', ibid., vol. 1, no. 4, Apr.–June 1964, pp. 108–17.
13. N. A. Siddiqi, 'The Classification of Villages under the Mughals', ibid., vol. 1, no. 3, Jan–March 1964, p. 82.
14. See note no. 2. Definitions of the office fief as 'the assignment of land revenue' was first given by W. H. Moreland and it has been widely accepted since then.
15. Cf. H. Fukajawa's Japanese article on 'Archives in India', *Shigaku-zasshi*, vol. 75, no. 8, 1966.
16. They are aş follows, (1) all edited by Y. H. Khan: *Selected Documents of Shah Jahan's Reign*, pub. by Daftar-i-Diwani, Hyderabad-Deccan, 1950, pp. xi + 260 (2) *Selected Documents of Aurangzeb's Reign, 1659–1706* AD, pub. by the Central Records Office, Government of Andhra Pradesh, 1958, pp. xv + 243 + 18 + 2. (3) *Selected Waqai of the Deccan* (*1660–1671* AD), pub. by Central Records Office, Hyderabad Govt., 1953, pp. 4 + xvi + 157 + 170.

    Hereafter, (1) is abbreviated as *Shah Jahan*, (2) as *Aurangzeb* and (3) as *Waqai*.
17. *Shah Jahan*, pp. viii–xi.
18. *Waqai*, pp. 3, i–iv.
19. Aban is the 8th month of Persian solar year, and is different from the month of Hijri lunar year.
20. *Dam* is the unit of copper coin. In the reign of Akbar, 40 *dams* were fixed at 1 rupee. Since then the value of *dams* gradually depreciated. H. H. Wilson, *A Glossary of Judicial and Revenue Terms* etc., Calcutta, 1940, p. 187.
21. *Shah Jahan*, no. 5, pp. 21–2.
22. Impositions consisted of 17 to 18 additional ones taxed on various pretexts. See, *Shah Jahan*, no. 90, 11/2/1654, p. 190.
23. *Aurangzeb*, A.R. no. 4966, 1/6/1671, pp. 97–8.
24. *Shah Jahan*, No. 56, 25/6/1644, pp. 121–4.
25. *Waqai*, Balda Elichipur, Subah Berar, no. 7, 18/5/1661, text p. 86.
26. *Aurangzeb*, A.R. no. 4956, 5/1/1659, p. 1. 'agar jama-ra az tabinan ba-jagirha firsitadan zarur danand bafarisand.'
27. *Shah Jahan*, no. 98, 19/1/1656, p. 199.
28. Vide I. Habib, op. cit., pp. 283–6.
29. Ibid., pp. 273, 294–5.

30. *Waqai*, Subah Baglana, no. 11, 1/12/1661, text p. 134. '. . . va naguzarad ke ahade az jagirdaran dast-i-taaddi bar riaya daraz numayad qadaghan kunad ke riaya dar bardashtan-i-zamin banajr va baghat koshish numayand.'
31. *Waqai*, Qillah Galna, no. 8, 17/11/1661, text p. 169. 'Nur Khan Lodi mansabdar az Pargana Lilang pesh Khwaja Burhani amin barae jamabandi amadah tashkhish kardah raft.' (Nur Khan Lodi, a *mansabdar*, came to the office of the assessment officer Khwaja Burhani from *pargana* Lilang. He settled the land revenue with the officer and returned.)
32. *Shah Jahan*, no. 41, 3/12/1641, p. 90. 'arz azin navishtah anke man ke Mirza Tatar Beg valad-i-Azbak Khan am hal-i-hasil sana 1050 ba-daftar-i-Bakhshi-ul-Mulki sipurdam—agar tafavat bar-ayad ba-dewaniyan-i-'azam javab guyam—in chand kalama ba tariq-i-sanad navishtah shud ke sani al-hal hujjat bashad.' (Azbak Khan, son of Mirza Tatar, submit a report on the conditions of revenue collection for the 1050 Hijri Year to the office of the provincial pay master. If there is any incorrectness in it, I shall be held responsible to the officer of the revenue authority. I write this in the form of the official letter so that there may not be trouble on this in future.)
33. *Shah Jahan*, no. 65, 19/7/1644, p. 139.
34. *Waqai*, Subah Baglana, no. 16, 18/1/1662, text p. 139.
35. *Waqai*, Sarkar Ramgir, no. 4, 5/5/1661, text p. 67.
36. S. M. Edwardes and H. L. O. Garrett, *Mughal Rule in India*, Delhi, 1956, pp. 166, 178.
37. *Shah Jahan*, p. VI. Edwardes & Garrett, op. cit., p. 170.
38. *Waqai*, Balda Elichipur, no. 4, 12/5/1661, text p. 84.
39. Ibid., do., no. 8, 25/5/1661, text p. 86.
40. Ibid. Subah Baglana, no. 10, 25/11/1661, text p. 132. '. . . jagirash az Pargana Lohir taghir shudah dar jagir-i-Khwaja Beg valad-i-Qalandar Khan qillahdar-i-Qillah Julher hasb-ut-tajwiz-i-Umdat-ul-Mulk Amir-ul-Umara tafwiz girdidah. . . .' (According to the confirmation of the Prime Minister, his fief was assigned within the fief of Khwaja Beg, son of the defence officer of the fort of Julher, in substitution for the fief in the *pargana* Lohir.)
41. *Aurangzeb*, A.R. no. 729, 25/11/1661, pp. 21–2. Ibid., A.R. no. 4969, 3/1/1662, p. 26. Ibid., A.R. no. 761, 22/1/1659, p. 2. 'az mahal-i-Siva vagaira az muta'aliqat-i-Parendah ba-tasarruf-i-

auliyai daulat-i-qahira dar khwahad amad tankhwah khwahad yaft.'

43. Ibid., A.R. no. 4990, 23/10/1662, pp. 36–7.
44. Ibid., A.R. no. 4959, 26/6/1668, pp. 63–4.
45. Ibid., A.R. no. 4996, 3/7/1667, p. 60.
46. *Waqai*, Subah Baglana, no. 16, 18/1/1662, text p. 139.
47. Ibid., Balda Elichipur, Subah Berar, no. 12, 15/5/1662, text p. 88.
48. Ibid., do., no. 13, 16/5/1662, text p. 88.
49. Ibid., Qillah Junnar, no. 1, 19/11/1661, text p. 161.
50. Ibid., do., no. 2, 30/11/1661, text p. 162.
51. *Aurangzeb*, A.R. no. 632, 26/1/1662, p. 27.
52. Ibid., A.R. no. 30, 20/1/1671, p. 87.
53. Ibid., A.R. no. 164, 23/1/1671, p. 91.
54. Ibid., A.R. no. 172, 2/1/1671, p. 71.
55. Concerning the expansion of the Maratha territories in the eighteenth century and the building up of the Sikh kingdom, see H. Fukazawa, 'Marathas and Sikhs—Formation and Break-up of the Regional Nationalist States' (in Japanese) in *Iwanami's World History*, vol. 13, 1971, pp. 373 to 75, 387 to 90.
56. Within 52 years after the death of emperor Aurangzeb in 1707, nine emperors ascended the throne. One of them was killed by his nephew, three were killed by the ministers of the opposing faction and two were deported by the ministers. During these years, the Governors of Deccan, Bengal and Oudh virtually became independent of the empire and behaved like independent rulers. See H. Fukazawa, 'Foreign Trade, Politics and Economy of India during the 16th and 17th centuries' (in Japanese), *Shakaikeizaishigaku*, vol. 37, no. 1, pp. 92 to 93. 1971.

CHAPTER 3: THE JAGIRDARI SYSTEM IN SOUTHERN MAHARASHTRA DURING THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY—THE CASE OF THE PATVARDHAN SARDARS*

I. INTRODUCTION

When Shivaji Bhonsle (b. 1627–d. 1680) established the Maratha kingdom along the Western Ghat in the middle of the seventeenth century, it was a small centralized bureaucratic state where, in principle, the government offices were not made hereditary, and both the civil and military officers received remuneration in money, not by the assignment of office fiefs. Sambhaji, the eldest son of Shivaji, succeeded his father, but was killed in 1689 during a surprise attack by the Mughal army. His son, prince Shahu (Shivaji II), was taken prisoner, and the kingdom was occupied by the Mughals. The following twenty years were not only a critical period for the survival of the Maratha powers, but also witnessed the beginning of great transformation in the state structure. During this period, Rajaram, the younger brother of Sambhaji, ascended the throne and waged guerilla wars against the Mughals as the leader of the Maratha generals, moving around various parts of the Deccan. In order to draw the Maratha generals to their side, the Mughals offered them posts of high offices and also office fiefs. Some of them accepted the offer and went over to the Mughal side. The leaders of the Marathas were thus forced to acknowledge the

* This article first appeared in Japanese in *HR*, vol. 64, no. 5, 1970 and then reproduced as chap. 3 of *SSEHI* (1972). However, the last section of the original article giving a rough sketch of the *jagirdari* system under British rule is omitted in this English translation.

areas which the generals wrested from the enemies as their fiefs so as to prevent them from abandoning their cause. Twenty years of guerilla wars in this way resulted in the establishment, all over Maharashtra, of many estates by the Maratha generals.

Death of the emperor Aurangzeb in 1707 ushered in the disintegration of the imperial system. Following his death, the captive prince Shahu was set free and he returned home. And then there ensued a war of succession between him and Shivaji III, a son of Rajaram, who had meanwhile succeeded to the crown. The contest ended in the victory of Shahu who ascended the throne (1708–49) and fixed his capital at Satara. He ceded the southern part of the kingdom, the Kolhapur area, to his cousins as a branch state.

Many of the old generals who conducted the guerilla wars supported Shivaji III at the time of the war of succession and then at the division of the kingdom. They therefore served at the court of Kolhapur or retired to their respective estates. The supporters of Shahu were mainly the unknown local chiefs scattered over north Maharashtra and the Brahmans from Konkan. The most prominent among the latter was Balaji Vishvanat Bhat, a collector of the Pune district (*taluk*). Shahu made these supporters either ministers or bearers of important offices of the central government. Balaji was promoted to be the prime minister (Peshwa) (1713–20). Shahu made these central offices hereditary, and he assigned to these bureaucrats hereditary fiefs at various places. As the king himself was unfit for administration work, the actual power of the state gradually passed on to the Peshwa's hands. Balaji, the first hereditary Peshwa, recaptured the old territories which had been parts of Shivaji's kingdom. The second Peshwa, Baji Rao I (1720–40), was ambitious to establish a Hindu empire and transferred the Peshwa's headquarters to Pune in about 1730. Then, taking advantage of the break-up of the Mughal empire, he dispatched some Maratha generals to various parts of the sub-continent with the object of subjugating those areas. The generals were allowed to possess the occupied areas as their hereditary domains. Thus the Maratha feudatory states were established beyond the borders of Maha-

rashtra in central, western and northern India. The feudatory lords had the obligation of attending upon the king at Satara, paying him tribute and rendering him military services nominally, but actually to the Peshwa at Pune. With this done they were allowed to control their domains with almost complete autonomy. The re-established Maratha kingdom was a loose confederacy of Maratha generals with the Peshwa at Pune as its power centre.[1] As shown elsewhere,[2] the Mughal empire as well as other Muslim kingdoms had a system of assigning certain localities as fiefs to their civil and military officers, who were every now and then transferred at short invervals. However, in the eighteenth-century Maratha kingdom, the fiefs of ministers and generals were virtually made hereditary. Why the fiefs became hereditary and what the inner structures of these fiefs were are problems that have scarcely been explored, and the present author has an intention of studying them in the near future.

The class of fiefs discussed in this paper are those that belonged to the Maratha generals situated within the territory of Maharashtra directly governed by the king at Satara or by the hereditary Peshwa at Pune as his proxy. As mentioned earlier, from the end of the seventeenth century to the early eighteenth century, the high class officials and generals of the king and Peshwa were given fiefs even within the central territory of the kingdom (Svarajya). Such fiefs were being continuously given through the late eighteenth century. More than a hundred families of fief-holders (variously called *sardar*, *saranjamdar*, or *jagirdar*, but they were all essentially similar) thus appeared in the southern areas which, along with a part of Kanara, were called Southern Maratha Country.[3] Most of them were created by the Maratha government during the last years of the seventeenth century and the eighteenth century. A number of fiefs had however been originally assigned by the Adilshahi dynasty in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and these with the passage of time became hereditary. Some fiefs were also granted in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by the Mughal emperors or the Nizams of Hyderabad, their successors. These

pre-existing fiefs were afterwards re-confirmed by the Maratha government.[4] Although the holders of smaller fiefs were frequently changed, many of the bigger fiefs were actually, and in some cases even formally, held hereditarily. Therefore, even within the directly-administered areas of the king and Peshwa, they could neither exercise full control over the entire area nor establish a system of patrimonial bureaucracy. Thus, numerous hereditary fief-holders were allowed to exist even in the central areas.

In this paper we examine the structure and nature of the fief-administration of the largest fief-holder, the Patvardhan family, during the eighteenth century. We hope this will throw some light on the 'feudalism' in Indian history. The reason for selecting this particular family of fief-holders is none else but that historical records concerning it are relatively rich.[5]

II. RISE OF THE PATVARDHAN FAMILY

The Patvardhans belonged to that Brahman caste of Konkan who virtually monopolized the high posts of the Peshwa and other important offices and thus became the 'new bureaucrats' in the eighteenth century. Priest Haribhat Patvardhan (1665–1751) from Kouthala village in the district of Ratnagiri was considered to be the founder of the family. The family genealogy of the Patvardhans is given in the chart below.

Haribhat became the family priest (*upadhya*) of a fief-holder, Ghorpade family, which possessed Ichalkaranji district to the south of Miraj, presumably at the beginning of the eighteenth century. In 1710, when a member of the Ghorpade family married a daughter of Balaji Vishvanat Bhat who was to become the first hereditary Peshwa, the family priest, Haribhat, got acquainted with Balaji.[6] Soon after, Haribhat's fourth son Govind and his sixth son Ramchandra were appointed as clerks at the Peshwa's headquarters. Govind was later promoted to be a head officer of cavalry. Govind, his eldest son Gopal, and Parashuram, a son of Ramchandra, made political and military

Genealogy of the Patvardhans in the Eighteenth Century.

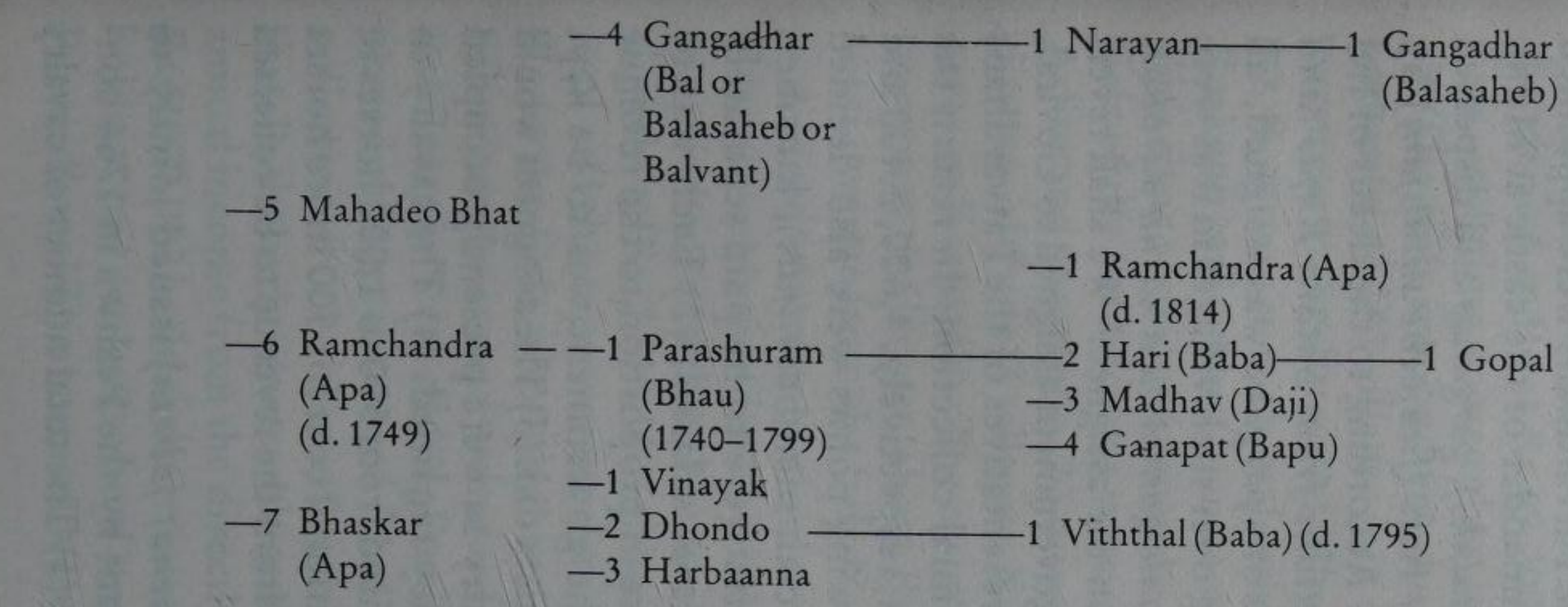
Haribhat Patvardhan— (1665–1750)

—1 Krishnabhat or Krishna Hari (Dada or Bapaji) (d. 1765)
- —1 Narayan (d. before 1764)
- —2 Purushottam (Daji) — —1 Hari Purushottam
- —3 Meghashyam (Bapu) — —1 Janardan
- —4 Balvant
- —5 Madhav (Anna) (d. 1772) — —1 Damodar

—2 Balanbhat
- —1 Moroba (Aba) — —1 Shripat
  - —1 Raghunath (Dada) — —1 Trinbak (Apa)
  - —2 Shiv (Subhedar)
- —1 Nilkant (d. 1771)
- —2 Konher (Raosaheb) (d. 1776) — —1 Ganapat (Bapu)

—3 Trinbak (Apa) (d. 1771)
- —1 Gopal (Dada or Raosaheb) (d. 1771)
- —2 Vaman (Baba)

—4 Govind (Nana) (d. 1771)
- —3 Pandurang (Tatya) (d. 1776)
  - —1 Hari (Baba) (d. 1780)
  - —2 Chintaman (Apa)
  - —3 Viththal (Bapu)



Sources: V. V. Khare ed., *Aitihasik-Lekh-Sangrah* , vol. I, Kurundvad, 1897, p. 7.
G. S. Sardesai, *Historical Genealogies*, Bombay, 1957, p. 75.
E. W. West, *A Memoir of the States of the Southern Maratha Country*, Bombay, 1869. p. 1.

Notes: There are some differences in the order of Haribhat's seven sons among the three sources mentioned above. The present author followed the order given by both Khare and West.

Names within parenthesis are nicknames. Rao or pant attached to the end of the names are omitted. The years of births and deaths are mostly taken from Sardesai with minor corrections on the basis of documents contained in Khare. At any rate these years cannot be very accurate.

exploits during the reigns of the third Peshwa Balaji Bajirao (1740–61) and the fourth Peshwa Madhav Rao I (1761–72). Thus the Patvardhans reached their zenith during the time of the fourth Peshwa. Haribhat's third son Trinbak served as a financier (*majumdar*) of the fief-holder Bhonsle family which possessed Akalkot district,[7] but his two sons (Nilkant and Konher) served the Peshwa and enjoyed his patronage as did his uncles and cousins. Thus, the Patvardhans were appointed the collector (*kamavisdar*), commander of the castle at Miraj, etc. and were assigned districts (*taluks*), *parganas* and dispersed villages (*phut ganv*) as military fiefs (*faujeche saranjam*) by the Peshwa in and around 1763. According to the deeds of fief conferment contained in *Selections from Satara Rajas' and Peshwa's Diaries*, when a district or a *pargana* was assigned, 'all authority over the fief, excepting over such villages in it as were already assigned to others' (*dumale ganva vaja karun darobast amal*) was usually conferred upon the assignee.[8] We shall revert to this point later. The Peshwa's government assigned to Govind, Parashuram and Nilkant as representatives of the Patvardhans fiefs worth Rs 2,250,000 in annual collection. In return the three assignees were to maintain, respectively, 4,600, 2,400 and 500 cavalry-soldiers. The following points were also decided upon: (1) Remunerations for clan members (*jati*), kinsmen (*bhaubandhu*) and clerical staffs were to be paid separately according to the current levels of salaries. (2) Each was to maintain a cavalry of certain size in proportion to the revenue receivable from the fiefs and the government was to be kept informed of this as other fief-holders did. (3) The assignees would be given such areas of the country as were presently occupied by the king of Mysore, were they regained. (4) The cavalry to be kept by Nilkant would be raised from 500 to 1,000 horses in the following year and the additional cost for 500 more horses (Rs 150,000) would be defrayed from the revenue to be collected from separately assigned fiefs.[9]

A deed of remuneration (*taenat jabata*) issued jointly to Govind, Parashuram and Nilkant by the Peshwa in 1764 contained the following provisions: (1) The total number of cavalry

to be kept by the three was 8,000. The maintenance cost of them was fixed at Rs 2,400,000. (2) Expenses for costumes were to be Rs 76,900. (This amount seems to correspond with the salaries given to the members of the *jati* and *bhaubandhu* mentioned above.) The recipients of this provision were Purushottam, Meghashyam and Madhav (all three sons of Krishna, the eldest son of Haribhat), Moroba, son of Balanbhat, Konher, son of Trinbak, and Vaman, son of Govind, and others. (3) Salaries to the clerical staffs at Rs 69,200. (4) The total revenue from the fiefs, including some other additions, was Rs 2,541,900 (*sic*). (5) The fiefs from where the above sum was to be collected consisted of 143 villages (out of 226 villages spreading over 22 *parganas* in the district of Miraj and 46 adjacent villages outside it), 8 *parganas* such as Jamkhandi, Tasgaon, Mangalvedha, Karkanb and others (names of such villages and their holders with their respective revenues as were to be excluded from the fiefs of the Patvardhans were specifically mentioned), towns of Ashte and Puntanbe, 20 dispersed villages (*phut ganv*) in the districts of Pune (4 villages), Kalyan (2 villages) & c. and various areas in Karnataka. The assigned revenue from the Karnataka areas was the largest, about Rs 1,218,080, or nearly half of the total revenue from the fiefs.[10]

A 'deed of remuneration' ten years later (1773–4) shows that Govind, who was dead by then, was succeeded by his second son, Vaman, and that the total revenue from the fiefs increased slightly to Rs 2,558,100, although the number of cavalry to be kept and the expenses for their maintenance remained the same. As to the fiefs, though three *parganas* were removed, three other *parganas*, and tributes from Sholapur and the town of Rahimatpur were added. Furthermore, the number of the dispersed villages increased from 20 to 27 with the result that the collection from these villages nearly doubled.[11] Considering that, in the early nineteenth century,[12] the Peshwa government's annual income from the directly-administered areas was about Rs 5,000,000 besides the tributes from feudatory lords and fief-holders, one can guess how large were the fiefs assigned to the Patvardhans. Their estates were further enlarged in 1784 when,

for unknown reasons,[13] the king of Kolhapur branch state ceded to Nilkant's two sons Kurandvad and Shedbal regions, which bordered on the district of Miraj.

In 1783, Chintaman, son of Pandurang, was appointed the provincial head administrator (*sar subah*) of the Peshwa's directly-administered area in Gujarat,[14] and Parashuram was appointed the commander-in-chief of the Maratha army when the Marathas sided with the British East India Company and the Nizam in the third Anglo-Mysore war (1790–2). The same Parashuram again acted as the commander-in-chief, when the Marathas' allied army defeated that of the Nizam at the pitched battles in 1795.[15]

Without going into the details of the struggles over the succession to the office of the Peshwa in the 1770s, it may be noted that the Patvardhans supported the lineal line consistently and that they had often to confront the last Peshwa, Baji Rao II (1796–1818), who belonged to the collateral line. Therefore, the Patvardhans, except Pandurang's son[16] Chintaman, remained inactive during the second Anglo-Maratha War (1803–5). The East India Company's request to them to remain neutral also had much to do with their indifference. At the time of the third Anglo-Maratha War (1817–18), the Patvardhans initially joined the Peshwa's army. However, when they saw that many feudatory lords and fief-holders had abandoned the Peshwa and also because of the East India Company's strategy to bring about fission among the Maratha powers, all the Patvardhans, except Chintaman and Gopal, a grandson of Parashuram, retired to their respective estates. Even Chintaman and Gopal withdrew their troops before long.[17] However, the Patvardhans opposed the Company's policy of abolishing the office of the Peshwa, along with many other fief-holders. They strongly expressed their hope that the office of the Peshwa would continue, but the Company ignored it. The Peshwa was deported to north India with an annual pension, and his directly-administered areas were merged into the British Indian territories. The king of Satara, Kolhapur branch state, the Maratha feudatory lords, and most of the fief-holders were allowed to exist as subordinate princes under the suzerainty of the Company.

In the meantime, several conflicts occurred among the Patvardhans over the management of fiefs and the distribution of income, and their fiefs were gradually partitioned. The first division took place presumably between 1780 and 1790, when Parashuram separated Tasgaon, Jamkhandi, Hukeri and other regions from the joint-fief and brought them under his fiefdom. The separation seems to have been made in proportion to the number of cavalry which Parashuram had to maintain. Following this, in 1793, two sons of Nilkant divided, almost equally, the Kurandvad and Shedbal regions which, as mentioned before, had been ceded to the Patvardhans by the king of the Kolhapur branch state.[18] Chintaman, the second son of Pandurang, managed the remaining fiefs in and around the Miraj district, but he was involved in quarrels with his uncle Gangadhar and in 1800 the fiefs were divided. Chintaman's cavalry share was 2,600 and Gangadhar's 2,000 as settled through arbitration by other relatives. Chintaman fixed his headquarters at the castle of Sangli and Gangadhar made the castle of Miraj his headquarters. In fact, this partition entailed very complicated provisions on the support of kinsmen and division of the arms and movable properties, which we need not discuss here.[19] This division of fiefs was formally confirmed by the Peshwa in 1808.[20] Later on, in 1811, the sons of Parashuram divided their fiefs into Tasgaon division and Jamkhandi division[21] and this was confirmed by the Peshwa in the same year.[22] In this way, by the early nineteenth century, the joint-fief of the Patvardhans was divided into six portions, namely, Sangli branch, Miraj branch, Tasgaon branch, Jamkhandi branch, Kurandvad branch and Shedbal branch.

III. STRUCTURE AND NATURE OF THE FIEF-ADMINISTRATION

Before examining the inner conditions of the Patvardhans' fiefs, we shall briefly note the fief-holders' obligations to the Peshwa. First, as mentioned earlier, it was enjoined that 'Holders of villages or lands as religious grants (*dharmada*), annual rewards (*varshasan*), tax-free lands (*inam*), and sustenance lands

(*dumala*) shall retain their rights. Be careful that no complaints of encroachment on their rights arise. Doubtful cases should be reported to the government.'[23] Thus even when a district, a *pargana*, or village was assigned as fiefs, the existing interests (rights of collections) did not change. The fief-holders were not to violate them. Second, the fief-holders were enjoined to pay 16 per cent[24] (in fact 18 per cent to 25 per cent)[25] of the annual collection to the Peshwa's government. The Peshwa, as in the directly-administered areas, sometimes ordered the fief-holders to collect and pay to the government the casual due of 10 per cent on the land revenue from peasants as well as the impositions of casual tax from village-heads, village-accountants, heads and accountants of the market-place, traders and artisans.[26] Such temporary impositions of 10 per cent seem to have been demanded frequently. Parashuram at one time wrote to his cousin Gangadhar that 'surely we have once admitted a payment of 10 per cent increase, but it should not be demanded every year. We have clearly told the Peshwa that it was not our duty to pay it.'[27] Though we cannot ascertain if the Patvardhans could successfully refuse this payment, there is no doubt that the Peshwa would often demand from the fief-holders tributes in excess of the prescribed sum. Third, it was the duty of the fief-holders to attend on the Peshwa with a prescribed number of cavalry and also to join the army when ordered.[28] In fact, they did not always keep the prescribed number of horses. Usually the cavalry they kept would at the most be two-thirds of the prescribed number.[29] This was how the fief-holders could save expenses. The duty of joining the army when ordered to do so became lax as the Peshwa's prestige and power declined. As we have already noted, this was the case at the time of the second Anglo-Maratha War. We will now turn our attention to the inner structure of the fief-administration, keeping in mind the relationship between the fief-holders and the Peshwa.

1. Structure of the Fief-administration

Needless to say, the Patvardhan families were at the top of the fief-administration. They were jointly assigned fiefs worth Rs 2,541,900 under the names of Govind (4,600 cavalry) and his

two cousins, Parashuram (2,400 cavalry) and Nilkant (1,000 cavalary) in 1763–4. In a 'deed of remuneration' issued by the Peshwa in 1764, 'Govind Hari' was mentioned as the representative of the three joint-holders.[30] As Govind and his eldest son Gopal passed away, his second son, Vamanrao Govind, was written as the representative in the 'deed of remuneration' of 1773–4.[31] Vaman appears to have died soon after, and his nephew Chintaman emerged as the representative in the 'deed of remuneration' of 1775.[32] However, it was Chintaman's father, Pandurang, who virtually represented the Patvardhans until 1776. Thus, these fiefs were represented by Govind and his direct descendants until their division in the 1780s. Other members of the kin group owed a kind of patriarchal obedience to the representative family which may be called the principal branch. For example, when the Peshwa claimed casual impositions of 10 per cent in 1776, even Parashuram, who was amongst the most powerful generals in the kingdom, told the Peshwa that 'the order must first be given to my cousin Pandurang Rao. We all obey his order.'[33] Thus the Patvardhan families were represented by the head of the principal branch. But it would be wrong to presume that there was a very rigid patriarchal principle among them, for after the 1780s the fiefs were divided among the kinsmen several times, and the families that branched off acted independently at the time of the Anglo-Maratha wars. In short, the Patvardhans were combined rather loosely by the principle of patriarchy.

There were many officers, generally called accountants (*karkun*), who worked under the Patvardhan families. In 1764, there were, at least, two registration officers (*phadnis*), two treasury officers (*potonis*), seven record keepers (*daftardar*), two registration officers on cavalry, two pay officers (*sabnis*) and one clerk (*chitnis*), in all eighteen principal officers (*karkuns*) who received annual salaries between Rs 300 and 700.[34] Some of these posts were hereditary, while others were not. Under these principal officers, many clerks of lower ranks must have worked as suggested by the total amount of salaries (Rs 69, 200) mentioned before.[35]

In order to transact the business of administration and collec-

tion, the fief-holder sent collectors (*mamledar* or *kamavisdar*) to various regions, and resident officers (*thanadar*) and stationing soldiers to the major towns and villages.[36] The collectors were appointed from among the important retainers of the family, who would usually belong to the same Brahman caste as the Patvardhans. Take the example of Rakshman Raghu who was once a local administrator working directly under the Peshwa. The Patvardhans thought highly of his ability and appointed him collector of important districts such as Chikodi and Jamkhandi; they even established marriage relation with him. He was thus taken into the kin group of the Patvardhans and his son was also given high position in the fief-administration.[37] Because of strict caste regulation about marriage, it was not possible of course that the Patvardhans would have marriage relation with all the capable administrators. The fief-holders nevertheless tried to reinforce their control over the fiefs by appointing members of the same caste to important offices and thereby extending over them the hold of patriarchal principle.

Under the local collector, there were one finance officer (*diwan*), several record keepers (*daftardar*) and a stationary troop (*hasham*). The posts of finance officers and record keepers were often made hereditary (*darak*). Therefore, the fief-holders sometimes found it necessary to check the work of these officers by sending a deputy (*gumaste*) into the locality.[38] The lower staff of the local offices such as the surveyors (*pahanidar*), who worked under the hereditary officers, were recommended by the collector and confirmed by the fief-holders. They were thus appointed, so to say, as patrimonial bureaucrats.[39] The fief-holders sometimes deputed directly several land-measurers to the localities with a prescribed measuring rod, and had the agricultural lands actually measured on the spot.[40]

Corresponding to the organization of fief-administration above, there was an organization of the local hereditary officers, such as the head of the *pargana* (*deshmukh*) and the *pargana* accountant (*deshpande*), the village head (*patil*), the assistant village head (*chaugula*), the village accountant (*kulkarni*), the head of the market-place (*sethe*), and the accountant of the

market-place (*mahajan*). They were all the hereditary officers of the respective localities. The present writer has examined elsewhere in detail the local hereditary officers in the seventeenth century Deccan.[41] As the system had not changed much in the eighteenth century, we shall here only briefly recapitulate the important points. These local officers were to be found not only in the fiefs, but also in the directly-administered areas; on the one hand, they acted as the representatives of the local people, negotiating various matters with the ruling power, and on the other, they were held responsible to the superiors for a variety of local obligations. And as rewards for their offices, the *pargana* heads and accountants were assigned a few tax-free villages (*inam gaon*) in their *pargana* and some tax-free land (*inam jamin*) in certain villages; they were also entitled to collect certain perquisites from the villages. Sometimes, the hereditary *pargana* officers acted as the village heads and accountants at the same time. Similarly, the village heads, assistant village heads and village accountants possessed some tax-free land and were also allowed to collect various perquisites from the villagers. The heads and accountants of market-places also collected certain perquisites from traders and manufacturers doing their business at the market-places. Usually, the *pargana* and village heads belonged to the Maratha caste, the *pargana* and village accountants to the Brahman caste, and the heads and accountants of market-places to the merchant caste. Such hereditary offices and the rewards attached to them were considered as patrimony (*vatan*) and could be inherited and partitioned by their descendants. These patrimonies could also be transferred or sold provided prior permission for such transactions had been received from the local community and the superior authorities. And such transactions seem to have taken place rather frequently.[42] However, it should be noted that in spite of changes as regards the holders of such patrimonies, the framework itself continued to function for some time even after the conquest of the Marathas by the British colonial power in the nineteenth century. These hereditary local officers behaved as if they were local overlords in their respective jurisdictions. In fact, in official

documents the *pargana* heads and accountants were often referred to as *zamindars* (local overlords). Naturally, they had great influences over the local people and without their cooperation regular collection of land-revenue and other impositions was hardly possible. For example, a fief-holder wrote that 'although the village head is present here, the village accountant and the assistant village head did not appear. Collection of land revenue (*jama vasul*) has been interrupted because these village officers have withheld the arrears (*baki*) of Rs 1,000 to Rs 1,500 and have absconded. The cultivation (*lavani*) and land revenue settlements (*sanchni*) are also under his (?) control. Therefore, you (? son of the fief-holder) should send the village head with soldiers to the village and bring them back.'[43] Fief-holders sometimes exacted labour-service (*veth*) and tributes (*khandni*) from the villages, in addition to the land-revenue (*aen jama*) and various impositions (*shivai jama*). One *pargana* head of Miraj district wrote a guarantee (*kaul*) concerning the tribute to a village head, saying that 'A tribute is to be demanded from your village. His Majesty (*Hujur*) ordered me to summon you at the resident officer's office of Ichalkaranji and settle the tribute to be imposed on your village. You explained the predicaments of your village. Considering your petition as well as the conditions of cultivation in the last year, I decided the amount at Rs 290. I issue this "guarantee" to make sure that nothing more than this sum is demanded from your village. Pay this amount and remain undisturbed.'[44]

2. *Nature of the Fief-administration*

The most important aspect of the rights of the fief-holders, who had the above-mentioned administrative staff and local hereditary officers, was the collection of various taxes such as the tariff (*zakat*) at the town and market-place,[45] business taxes (*mohatarpha*) on the traders and artisans of the towns and villages, and above all the land-revenue, various impositions, tributes and labour-services from the villages.[46] At the time of entering a town, traders and artisans, even ordinary people had to obtain

permits (*parvanagi*) from the fief-holders.[47] Our sources do not however reveal how the tariffs were collected. The duty of collecting tariffs might have been farmed out to someone as was often done in other regions of the Deccan. Nor is it clear how the business taxes were collected. However, in a city, penalties for committing adulteries by traders were realized by the head of the market-place, and fees for remarriage of the female weavers were collected by the head (*mehtre*) of the same caste. The collected penalties and fees were paid to the collector of the region.[48] It is therefore likely that the heads of professional castes collected the business taxes. Most of the income of a fief doubtlessly came from the land-revenue, impositions and casual tributes from the villages. They were usually collected in the form of money, and not in kind. There is no record to show what proportion of these collections was to the total agricultural production, but according to the present author's researches on the Peshwa's directly-administered area, these collections formed nearly half of the gross production.[49] It is probable that the collections from the Patvardhans' fiefs was also about half of the agricultural produce. In the villages, it was the village heads who were directly held responsible for the collection of land revenue and its payment to the centre. The burden of land revenue seems to have been quite heavy. When a village head fell into arrears with the revenue he would be imprisoned at the fort, and would be released only when the surety (*jamin*), who was usually a village head or village accountant of the neighbouring village, appeared.[50] Out of 195 prisoners in the prison of Miraj castle at least nine were village heads who were detained because of the arrears of revenue. They were put in chain (*bedi*) and often beaten (*mar*) like other prisoners imprisoned for embezzlement, robbery, burglary, murder, adultery and other crimes.[51]

There is no doubt that, in addition to the right of forcible collection of revenue, the fief-holders exercised judicial authority over criminal cases and imposed punishment to criminal offenders. However, in civil cases such as those relating to caste troubles and disputes over *vatan* the fief-holders were not entitled to judge and settle the matter arbitrarily, but, in accor-

dance with the customs, they had to refer such cases to a justice assembly where the disputing parties and witnesses would be present.[52] For example, in 1780 three persons of the palanquin bearer caste (*bhoi*) got into troubles among them and two of them approached the government collector for settling the dispute. The collector interrogated the disputing parties, but no settlement was reached. Whereupon, all the members of the palanquin bearer caste (*samast got bhoi*), including the palanquin bearers of the king of Satara and those of the Peshwa, came to the office of the collector and appealed that 'whenever any trouble arose among the palanquin bearers, the matter was always settled within the caste. We never go to the office of the government.' The collector therefore requested the fief-holder of Miraj as follows: 'Allow me to send the parties concerned to Pune, as there is no member of the palanquin bearer caste at Miraj. All members of the caste (*got samast*) will meet at Pune and settle the matter. For the justice to be done at the caste assembly (*got*), I will send them to Pune. If injustice (*anyaya*) should happen, please inflict penalty on the offenders.'[53] In 1787, a dispute arose between two persons over the office of the head (*sethe*) of the market-place at Rahimatpur town in the fief of the Patvardhans, and the case was brought to the local administrator of the town. Though the administrator referred the matter to the assembly of the town people (*pandhari*), no conclusion could be reached. The fief-holder then referred the dispute to an assembly of another place, but there again it could not be settled. As the parties again submitted a petition to the fief-holder, he asked them to settle the dispute by arbitration. One of them agreed to do this, but the other would not. Thereupon, the fief-holder imprisoned the latter along with his brothers and sons. The imprisoned disputant died in the prison. His widow then petitioned that in order to settle the matter through the local assembly her sons and brothers-in-law should be released. The fief-holder then set them free and again ordered the concerned persons to call the assembly.[54] From the above cases we see that a fief-holder was expected to first refer a 'civil problem' to the caste or community assembly for settlement, and that he could imprison a

disputant when he was judged to be wrong (*khota*) by the assembly of justice; a fief-holder could also imprison a disputant if he refused to abide by the assembly's arbitration when the dispute could not be settled in it. Among the prisoners in the prison of Miraj castle mentioned earlier, not a small number were detained because of civil disputes.[55]

The fief-holder not only exercised compulsory powers, he also gave protection to the people. When a cavalry man (*shiledar*) lost his horse in the battlefield the fief-holder gave him the money to procure another horse; he gave injured soldiers certain allowances;[56] but he also reduced (*sut*) the land-revenue and other impositions from the villages, were they affected by draught, or ravaged by passing army or raids.[57] A fief-holder also provided a leather maker (*chanbhar*) with two pies for two days when the latter's son of six months suffered from asthenia due to stomach trouble.[58] Although the fief-holder in medieval India exercised compulsory powers over his people, it was also his moral duty (*dharma*) to give them protection when the necessity arose.

NOTES

1. For details of these historical processes, see my article in Japanese, 'Marathas and Sikhs—Formation and Break-up of Regional Nationalist States', *Iwanami's World History*, vol. 13, 1971, pp. 371–3.
2. Chap. I, pp. 60–6 & Chap. II, pp. 4–16.
3. The correct number cannot be ascertained. For example, one study mentions 61 families (22 Maratha caste fief-holder families, 36 Brahman fief-holder families and 3 Muslim local overlord families) on the basis of memos collected by the British administrators in the early half of the nineteenth century (G. C. Vad selected and P. V. Mawjee & D. B. Parasnis (ed.), *Kaifiyats, Yadis, etc., containing Historical Accounts of Certain Families of Renown in the Deccan and Southern Maratha Country under the Mohammedan and Maratha Governments*, Poona, 1908, pp. 1–2). Another work mentions 83 small princely states in the southern

Maharashtra in the middle of the nineteenth century. But among them many belonged originally to the same family which was partitioned in the nineteenth century. (E. W. West, *A Memoir of the States of the Southern Maratha Country drawn up for the Government*, Bombay, 1869, pp. XIV–XXI.)

4. *Kaifiyats, Yadis, etc*, op. cit., pp. 41–8, 59–63, 63–4, 84–5, 230–51.
5. This chapter is mainly based on the following three sources: (1) G. C. Vad prep. and P. V. Mawjee & D. B. Parasnis (ed.), *Selections from the Satara Raja's and the Peshwa's Diaries*, 9 vols., Poona, 1906–11 (hereafter abbreviated as *SSRPD*). For more information about this source, see chap. IV, footnote no. 7. (2) V. V. Khare (Sanskrit Teacher of Miraj High School) (ed.), *Aitihasik-Lekh-Sangrah*, 15 vols., Kurundvad, Miraj, or Poona, 1897–1948 (abbreviated as *ALS*). This is a collection of 7,272 letters concerning the wars and politics of the Miraj branch of the Patvardhan family; vols. 13 to 15 were compiled by Y. V. Khare, son of V. V. Khare. Unfortunately, I could not consult vols. 3 and 6 out of 15 vols. (3) E. W. West) Assistant to the Political Agent, Kolhapore and Southern Maratha Country), *A Memoir of the States of the Southern Maratha Country drawn up for the Government*, Bombay, 1869, pp. XXI + 249 + CXCI (Selections from the Records of the Bombay Government, no. CXIII—New Series) (abbreviated as *E.W. West*). This contains three deeds of remuneration (*taenat jabata*) given by the Peshwa to the Patvardhan family in the latter half of the eighteenth century, in addition to the English administration records in the last appendix. The above-mentioned three 'deeds of remuneration' cannot be found in *ALS*.
6. *E. W. West*, pp. 1–2. G. S. Sardesai, *Historical Genealogies*, Bombay, 1957, p. 35.
7. *E. W. West*, p. 2.
8. Concerning the conferment of offices and fiefs on the members of the Patvardhan family, see *SSRPD*, vol. IX, nos. 195, 197–203.
9. Ibid., vol. IX, no. 204.
10. *E. W. West*, Appendix A, pp. III–XXXI.
11. Ibid., Appendix B, pp. XXXII–CXIV.
12. Ibid., Appendix F, p. CXXXVIII.
13. Ibid., p. 3, footnote.
14. *SSRPD*, vol. IV, no. 288.
15. *E. W. West*, pp. 9–11.

16. Ibid., pp. 19–23.
17. Ibid., pp. 30–36.
18. *ALS*, vol. IX, no. 3470 (1793–5–4), pp. 4610–12.
19. Ibid., vol. XI, no. 5222 (1800–1–2), pp. 6199–204.
20. Ibid., vol. XV, no. 7189 (1808–9–28), pp. 8343–5.
21. *E. W. West*, p. 110.
22. *SSRPD*, vol. V, no. 82, pp. 96–8.
23. *E. W. West*, Appendix B, pp. CXII–CXIII.
24. Ibid., pp. XXXI, CXIII.
25. *ALS*, vol. VII, nos. 2661–2.
26. Ibid., vol. V, no. 1756 (1776–1–7), pp. 2471–2.
27. Ibid., vol. VII. no. 2624 (1781–5–7), p. 3623.
28. Ibid., vol. IX. no. 3643 (1795–10–21), p. 4782.
29. *E. W. West*, Appendix F, p. CXXXI.
30. *E. W. West*, Appendix A, p. III.
31. Ibid., Appendix B. p. XXXII.
32. Ibid., Appendix C. p. CXV.
33. *ALS*, vol. V, no. 1759 (1776–1–7), pp. 2471–2.
34. *E. W. West*, Appendices, pp. IV, XXXIII, CXVI.
35. Ibid., Appendix A, p. IV.
36. *SSRPD*, vol. IX, no. 201 (1763–10–14), p. 193; no. 202 (1763–10–14), p. 194.
37. *ALS*, vol. VIII, pp. 4132–83; no. 3094, pp. 4184–5; no. 3104, p. 8195.
38. Ibid., vol. XII, no. 5789 (1800–6–11), pp. 6743–4.
39. Ibid., vol. XV, no. 7261 (undated), p. 8425.
40. Ibid., vol. VIII, no. 3145 (1788–3–30), p. 4251.
41. See chap. I, pp. 45–56.
42. For example, see *ALS*, vol. XV, pp. 8361–6.
43. Ibid., vol. I, no. 120 (1762–11–26), p. 182.
44. Ibid., vol. VII, no. 2547 (1780–6–3), p. 3520.
45. Ibid., vol. XV, no. 7189, p. 8344.
46. Ibid., vol. I, no. 130 (1762–12––2), p. 194.
47. Ibid., vol. VII, no. 2707 (1783 AD), p. 3746.
48. Ibid., vol. VIII, no. 3114 (1789 AD), p. 4212.
49. See chap. VII, pp. 52–3 & 57–8.
50. *ALS*, vol. VII, nos. 1703–4 (1783 AD), p. 3745; vol. XV, nos. 7252–3 (1784 AD), pp. 8422–3.
51. Ibid., vol. VII, no. 2702, pp. 3726–7, 3733, 3740.
52. See chap. I, pp. 49–50; chap. IV, pp. 37–41.
53. *ALS*, vol. VII, no. 2566, p. 3556.

54. Ibid., vol. VIII, no. 3115, pp. 4213–14.
55. Ibid., vol. VII, no. 2702, pp. 3720–44.
56. Ibid., vol. VII, nos. 2625–31.
57. Ibid., vol. I, no. 68 (1763 AD), p. 96.
58. Ibid., vol. XV, no. 7224 (1786 AD), pp. 8412–13.

CHAPTER 4: THE STATE AND THE CASTE SYSTEM (JATI)*

I. INTRODUCTION

Major aspects of existing caste system of India have been discussed by ethnologists and anthropologists (collectively called sociologists hereafter) since the late nineteenth century. They have mentioned, for instance, that all over India there are about three thousand endogamous groups called caste, that the caste membership is fixed by heredity, that each caste has, or had in the past, its own council in each small region which can punish those of its members who deviated from its customary rules, that each caste is restricted to take certain hereditary occupations, that there is some collaboration between different castes in a small locality and often in a village through the exchange of service and goods that can be rendered or produced within their respective traditional occupations, that interdining and other social contacts between castes are more or less restricted by peculiar ideas of purity and pollution, and that there is a hierarchy between the castes in a region with the Brahmins at the top and the untouchables at the bottom.[1]

These sociologists, however, have not undertaken any historical study of the caste system in depth apart from stressing various views on its origins in the pre-historic period of India, such as the racial antipathy and mixture, the tribal division and specialization, the dominance of the ideas of pollution and taboos prevalent among some primitive peoples, the priestly and magical functions of Brahmins and their ideological influence,

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and so on.[2] When they study the existing caste system and express various views on its origins, most of them take it for granted that the system developed and has continued as such *spontaneously* without any relationship with secular political powers during the ancient and medieval India.

There are, however, at least two sociologists who have expressed doubt about this general hypothesis. One is A. M. T. Jackson who, in a short article in 1907, pointed out, first, that ancient Hindu laws had stressed that the king was to maintain the status-order of society by making the subjects conform to their status-duties and by punishing the deviators. Second, he showed that a number of castes in modern India had names which were apparently based on the names of kingdoms, capitals or administrative centres in ancient India; he therefore assumed that the state power in ancient India was at least 'one important factor' for the development and diversification of the caste system.[3] The other sociologist is J. H. Hutton. He points out fifteen different factors for the rise, development, and continuity of the caste system, and one of these is political. He declares, 'the ultimate controlling authority (of the system) is secular,' and mentions that in many of the princely states of India in the 1930s the caste system was under state control, and important caste affairs of the subjects such as expulsion from or re-admission to a caste, and dispute about caste ranking were either decided by the king himself or at least such decisions had to have the king's recognition. Further the Hindu kings of the twelfth century Bengal and of the fourteenth century north Bihar exercised similar authorities. Even the Muslim navabs of pre-British Bengal acted as the judges of caste affairs, and the re-admission to a caste was to have his recognition.[4]

Compared with such sociologists, Indian historians appear to have shown little interest in this system. To be sure, there are works that have proved the *existence* of various castes during the ancient and medieval periods.[5] But to the best of my knowledge no detailed examination has been made of the roles of state power in the regulation of caste system in any period of Indian history.[6]

In this essay I will make an attempt to examine the roles of state in the caste system in the directly-administered regions (*swarajya*) of the eighteenth century Maratha kingdom. This I hope will reveal that the caste system was not only a spontaneously formed and sustained social order of the people, it was also controlled, protected and sustained by the state.

The procedure to be followed in this essay is as follows:

First, we will try to show that the state played a decisive part in the removal, and more especially in the restoration, of caste-status of *individual persons* who had deviated from the traditional religio-social code of conduct.

Second, we will try to illustrate that regarding *individual castes* as status groups, the state often confirmed internal splits within a caste and enforced certain code of conduct to be observed by as well as between separate castes.

And third, we will suggest some probable reasons for the state regulation of caste system.

The source-material on which this essay is based comprises about eighty contemporary official records written in Marathi, pertaining to this topic. These have been collected from the following source-books. (1) G. C. Vad (prep.), *Selections from the Satara Raja's and the Peshwa's Diaries (Satarkar Maharaja va tyancha Peshve hyancha Rojnishintil Utare)*, 9 vols., Poona, 1906–1911.[7] (2) G. S. Sardesai (ed.), *Selections from the Peshwa Daftar (Peshve Daftaratun Nivadlele Kagad)*, 45 vols., Bombay, 1930–34.[8] And (3) R. V. Oturkar (ed.), *Peshve-Kalin Samajik va Arthik Patravyavahar*, Poona, 1950.[9]

II. FORFEITURE AND RESTORATION OF CASTE-STATUS

1. *Forfeiture of Caste-Status* (bahishkar, valit, apankta)

Our source-material shows that quite a few persons who behaved or were suspected to have behaved against the established code of conduct forfeited their caste-status. It appears that they were barred by their caste-fellows from taking part in any social ceremony and intercourse, including marriage and interdining.

However, it is not always clear how the members of *other* castes treated them. At any rate one's caste-status could be forfeited either through internal decision taken among one's caste-fellows or through external decision imposed by the government. We find at least fifty-five cases in fifty records that refer to the forfeiture of caste-status. These cases are itemized as follows.

Group A. Thirty-eight cases of forfeiture decided by caste-fellows:

a. nine cases caused by conversion to Islam or other religious sects[10]—eight cases about Brahmins and one about a man whose caste cannot be ascertained
b. ten cases caused by confirmed or suspected sexual offences[11]—six cases about Marathas, one each about a Brahmin woman, a woman of merchant caste (*vani*), a temple-keeper (*gurao*), and a cowherd (*gauli*)
c. five cases caused by confirmed or suspected murders[12]—four cases about Brahmins and one about Marathas
d. four cases caused by one's own, one's wife's or mother's caste-status getting suspected[13]—one case each about Brahmin, temple-keeper, carpenter (*sutar*), and gardener (*mali*)
e. two cases caused by impure interdining[14]—all about Brahmins
f. eight cases caused by other reasons[15]—three cases about Brahmins, and one each about mendicant (*gosain*), peasant (*kunbi*), woman of weaving caste (*sali*), woman of wine-drawing caste (*kalar*), and woman whose caste is not clear

Group B. Seventeen cases of forfeiture decided by government:

a. four cases caused by impure interdining[16]—all about Brahmins
b. three cases caused by killing men or cows[17]—one case each about Brahmin, peasant and washerwoman
c. three cases caused by failure to observe mourning at the death of relatives[18]—two cases about Brahmins and one about temple-keeper (*pujari*)

d. two cases caused by violation of marriage rules[19]—both about Brahmins
e. one case caused by illicit sexual intercourse[20]—about Brahmin woman
f. one case caused by conversion to a certain religious sect[21]—to apply to all the castes
g. three other cases[22]—all about Brahmins

When we compare the numbers of cases in Groups A and B, we find that those in A are more numerous than those in B. This may indicate that forfeiture of caste-status was for the most part decided and given effect to by the internal decision made among the caste-fellows. And it does not appear that the caste-fellows applied for permission of the government whenever they excommunicated any members. Moreover, some members might be expelled on the basis of mere suspicion by their neighbours without examining the allegation.

Whether the forfeiture of caste-status affected only the persons directly punished or also their family-members and close relatives, depended on the nature of the case and the decision made by the caste-fellows. At any rate even those who associated or were suspected to have associated with the outcaste would be excommunicated by their caste-fellows.[23] So far as the forfeiture of caste-status was concerned, the caste-group certainly performed a fairly strong autonomy.

As Group B suggests, however, there were also many cases where the government through its local agents exposed and examined (*shodh, choksi*) the deviators, deprived them of their caste, and ordered the local bureaucrats, hereditary officers of the place, and the caste-fellows to carry out the punishment. Such orders appear to have been *usually* carried out in fact, because whereas ten cases out of Group B only show the government order for excommunication without their result being clear, the remaining seven cases are those where the persons *actually deprived of their caste by the government* applied to the government for its restoration.[24] Moreover, if any person was found to have ignored the government's command and

associated with someone already expelled out of his caste, he himself would be excommunicated by the government.[25]

On the other hand, thirteen cases out of seventeen in Group B are in connection with Brahmins forfeiting their caste-status. This shows that the Maratha government, while assuring the highest status for Brahmins, as will be discussed later, tried to force them to observe the strictest religio-social code of conduct.

2. *Restoration of Caste-Status* (jatint ghenen)

Not all those who lost their caste remained outcaste for the rest of their life. Most of the outcastes appear to have been restored to their former caste by the government and thus assimilated into the established order of society. Out of the fifty records mentioned above about forfeiture of caste, only three were cases of 'permanent loss of caste' (*ghatasphot*) as will be referred to below, while thirty-three records show that the government allowed the restoration of caste. Three out of the remaining fourteen records are about request to the government for reviving the caste-status, and the rest eleven are concerned with caste-status removed or ordered to be removed by the government; but these fourteen records also show that the outcaste would recover their status later.

'Permanent loss of caste' (*ghatasphot*) appears to have seldom occurred. The circumstances of three records concerned with it are as follows: In one case a Brahmin eleven years after he was converted to Islam in a remote region, returned home and was readmitted to his caste by the caste-fellows, but the government did not approve of this decision and permanently removed his and his wife's caste-status.[26] The second is the case where the government arrested a Brahmin woman for a charge of illicit sexual relation with a Muslim, deprived her of her caste-status permanently, and imprisoned her.[27] And the third is the case where the government arrested another Brahmin woman for a similar charge with a low-caste man, removed her caste-status permanently with her caste-fellows' consent, and imprisoned her.[28]

Excepting such special cases, caste-status once removed could be later restored. It seems that this restoration was possible only when the government specifically sanctioned it after considering applications received either from the outcaste's caste-fellows, or the outcaste himself, or his close relations.

Three points are important in regard to the procedure by which the government sanctioned the restoration.

First, the government's principle about the matter was that 'in order to re-admit one into his caste, the consent of one's caste-fellows and the sanction of the government are required' (*tyas jatint ghenen ti gotachi rajavandi va sarkarchi adnya pahije*).[29] There is no record of any instance of caste-fellows stubbornly opposed to the re-admission to caste once sanctioned by the government. Rather when caste-fellows at their discretion revived the caste-status of an outcaste 'without getting the government's sanction' (*sarkarcha adnyeshivaye*), the government did not acquiesce in it, but expelled all the caste-fellows involved in the matter from their caste[30] or imposed a heavy fine (e.g. Rs 3000) upon the oucaste who was unofficially re-admitted to his caste.[31]

Secondly, when a person, who got his caste-status revived by the government, was a Brahmin or a member of a high caste, the government ordered him to receive purification (*prayashchitta*) at a holy place (*kshetra*). There were several different ways of receving purification, such as donating certain amount (fixed by the government) of money to Brahmin priests of some holy place (*prajapatya*), walking certain fixed number of rounds around temples of some holy place (*pradakshina*), drinking a 'liquid mixture of five things derived from the cow' (*panchagavya*) given by Brahmin priests of the holy place, and so on. It is important to note that although such a purificatory ceremony was conducted by priests, it was the government that sanctioned and ordered them to do so. If any priests performed the ceremony on their own accord without a permission of the government, they would be deprived by the government either of their caste-status or of their hereditary perquisites (*inam*).[32]

And thirdly, when the government restored the caste-status,

the person concerned was often enjoined to pay into the government treasury some money (e.g. Rs 25, Rs 50, Rs 1001, or Rs 25,001).[33] This indicates that the financial interest of the government was one of the reasons why the revival of caste-status had to be sanctioned by the government, whereas it could be removed without official permission.[34]

III. GOVERNMENT AND CASTES

Besides the forfeiture and revival of caste-status of individual persons, various disputes and problems arose between castes as well as within the same caste, and these were often brought to the central government for solution. Some ideas of the judicial institutions and procedures at the Maratha government may be obtained from Dr V. T. Gune's work.[35] Here only a few words may be mentioned about the matter. Judicial procedures of the Maratha government were by no means uniform; they varied according to the nature of the case. During King Shahu's regime he would preside over cabinet-meeting (*rajmandal* or *majalsi hujur*) composed of his ministers, and during the Peshwa period the Peshwa (hereditary prime minister) would consult judicial matters with his law minister (*nyayadish*), chief secretary (*phadnis*) and other high-class officials, and the decision would be made in the name of the King (or Peshwa). Or, when it was deemed necessary, the government would summon representative Brahmin priests from various holy places, and make a decision based on their expert opinions. Otherwise, the King or the Peshwa would preside over a justice assembly (*sabha* or *panchayet*), consisting of his ministers as well as the disputing parties and their witnesses, and the parties and witnesses would submit their statements and evidences before the assembly. The King (or the Peshwa) and his ministers would consider all these and then make a decision usually after obtaining the parties' consent to the intended decision and give them a royal decree (*rajapatra*), a decision certificate (*nivadpatra*) or an assurance letter (*abhayapatra*). In whatever way the decision might be made, what is important here is that the government informed the local

bureaucrats and hereditary officers of the place and the persons concerned with the decision, and ordered them to give effect to the decision.

Caste disputes and problems may be divided into two categories: those generated between factions within a caste, and others concerned with the code of behaviour to be observed either between different castes or by a certain caste. We will examine some decisions made by the government on these two categories of disputes.

1. Confirmation of Internal Splits in a Caste

Our source-material suggests the following reasons for development of internal factions in a caste: (a) If a section of a caste lived for a long time in some abnormal surroundings, it would often adopt social customs and practices which deviated from traditional ones, and this might lead to the formation of a faction. (b) Factions would be formed through the development of superior and inferior pedigrees in it. When some section of a caste adopted a new occupation other than the traditional ones due to economic necessity or as a result of its association with some religious sect, it might give rise to the formation of a faction. We will illustrate how various kinds of internal splits were confirmed and consolidated by the government.

A. Peshwa's Government sent the following order (*sanad*) dated 24 June 1744 to a bureaucrat posted in Bassein (Vasai) region:

'Ranchhod Naik Vaidya, resident of above region, represented to Hujur (Peshwa), "In the (above) region, formerly ruled by the Portuguese (from 1532 to 1739 AD), some of Yajurvedi Brahmins agreed among themselves to give in marriage maternal uncle's daughter to a nephew (viz. to her cross-cousin), and some people were thus married. But the kingdom of *dharma* (*dharmarajya* = Maratha kingdom) has been established now (over the region). According to law books (*dharmashastra*) this is an improper conduct. Therefore, please take Rs 50 from such people as have entered into such marriages and make their caste separate." This is why this letter is issued to you. Then take a

fine of Rs 50 to the government from those Yajurvedi Brahmins in the (former) Portuguese region who might conduct in such a way, and separate their caste. Take a copy of this letter and give the original to above Vaidya for his possession'[36] (brackets mine).

The Yajurvedi Brahmins were one of the five Brahmin castes in Maharashtra (see footnote 46 of this essay). Ancient Hindu law books contained complicated rules about marriage. One of these was the prohibition of marriage between members of same kinship group called *sapinda* composed of relatives extending up to the maternal fifth and paternal seventh degree. And according to the Hindu method of degree-counting, cross-cousins were of the third degree to each other, so that cross-cousin marriage was considered illegal.[37]

The record translated above indicates that during the two hundred years of Portuguese rule some of the Yajurvedi Brahmins of Bassein region had relaxed their marriage rule and practised cross-cousin marriage probably because their sphere of life was so limited that they had difficulty in finding legitimate marriage partners for their children, and the government accepted an appeal from an orthodox section of the Brahmin and divided or tried to divide the caste.

B. In December 1768, the Poona government made a decision on a dispute about pedigrees in the weaver (koshti) caste, and gave a certificate to the leaders (*mehetre*) of the caste who resided at Shahapur ward of Poona city. This certificate as shown in the *Diaries* is too lengthy to be reproduced here. Only a summary of it is given below:

While the weaver caste had been split into 'weavers of good pedigree' (*changle jatiche Koshti*) and 'descendants from female slaves' (*batkicha vansh*), in Poona some sections of the former as well as of the latter had continued to practise marriage and other associations with each other. Leaders of the caste at Poona, however, were strongly opposed to this practice and appealed to the government to stop it. Accordingly, the record says, the government summoned leaders of the caste from various places and enquired into the custom as practised in those places. The

leaders stated unanimously that there was no custom of intermarriage between the two factions. Thereupon the government decided: 'there is no reason to allow him (the descendant from female slaves) to marry with good lineage; he should restrict his association within the lineage of female slaves.... You [good lineage] should not hereafter admit into your group anyone descending from the female slaves' lineage. The latter should not associate with the good lineage.'[38] And the government issued a certificate to that effect to the leading Weavers of Poona and levied a tribute of Rs 5,000 upon them.

This record suggests that whereas splits had already taken place within the weaver caste on the basis of different pedigrees, these splits were not yet definite and some marriages and other social intercourse continued to be performed between the two groups, and that it was the government which confirmed the vague splits and systematized the division.

C. *Four records concerning the tailor (*shinpi*) caste illustrate an example where the government confirmed internal splits caused by the change of occupation. According to these records discussed below, at the beginning of the eighteenth century a section of the tailor caste had adopted the profession of dyeing (*rangaripana*) and another section had specialized as indigo dyers (*nilari*). We find the following record regarding *shinpis* and *rangaris*.

On 8 May 1728 King Shahu issued the following order to the hereditary officers of thirteen provinces of his kingdom: 'Justice is going to be done regarding *shinpis* and *rangaris*. Therefore marriage, re-marriage, ceremonies and festivals between their families have been prohibited (until the decision is made). Do not allow ceremonies and festivals to take place'[39] (parenthesis mine). This record shows that while marriage and other social ceremonies continued to be performed between these two groups until this time, some dispute had taken place between these

*(Editor's Note) Certain modifications were made on the following pages, at the suggestion of Professor H. Kotani, so as to eradicate some misleading arguments concerning the division of the *shinpis* into several sub-castes. (S. Taniguchi)

groups and this had been brought to the government for settlement, and that then the government forbade marriage etc. between them until the decision was made. The next record below suggests that the King later acknowledged formally the division, making *rangaris* a sub-caste of *shinpis*. The King made two more decisions in regard to this division. The record we have of these decisions is, however, not in the original (*asal*) but a copy (*nakal*).

On 11 October 1783 the seventh Peshwa issued the following order to all the *shinpis* of the Saswad region: 'When a dispute about caste took place between *shinpi* dyers (*rangaris*) and indigo dyers (*nilaris*), the late King Shahu made a decision, "Shinpis belonging to Namdev sect (Namdev *shinpi*) should follow the needle-work etc. and those who, though *shinpis*, are engaged in the occupation of dyeing should continue the same business, and (they) should have no relation of dining and other intercourse with the indigo dyers." Although such a royal decree was issued, information have reached Hujur (Peshwa) to the effect that *shinpi* dyers and indigo dyers are united and marriages take place among them. The matter should therefore be enquired into. So send a detailed report about your social behaviour'[40] (parenthesis mine).

The Namdev sect mentioned in the above record was founded by a *shinpi* saint named Namdev probably during the first half of the fifteenth century.[41] This record indicates that King Shahu made three decisions when a dispute about caste occurred among *shinpis*, *rangaris* and *nilaris*: (1) those *shinpis* who belonged to the Namdev sect should do needle-work etc.; (2) those *shinpis* who were engaged in dyeing should be separated; and (3) *rangaris* (dyers) and *nilaris* (indigo dyers) should be clearly separated from each other. This record also suggests three more points: (1) the first two of the three decisions were being observed in fact or at least were considered by the Peshwa's government as having been observed, for the record keeps silent about their results; (2) the third decision was, however, not carried out; and (3) when an official decision was not put into practice, the government did not always connive at but examined the matter.

The two documents discussed above are concerned with the separation of *shinpis* from the *shinpi rangaris* on the one hand, and of the *shinpi rangaris* from *nilaris* on the other. But they show nothing about the relationship between *shinpis* proper and *nilaris*. This relationship is referred to in the following two undated records issued during the fourth Peshwa's regime (1761–72).

According to one record, some *shinpis* of Poona city used to arrange marriages with *nilaris*, and other *shinpis* of the city also approved of this practice. *Shinpis* of Saswad town objected to this and reported the matter to the government. The government then summoned and examined the *shinpis* of Poona, who stated that *shinpis* of other places also had regular marriage relations with *nilaris*. Accordingly the government instituted an enquiry into the matter.[42]

And then another record states that sometime later when a *shinpi* of Poona, in accordance with current practice, tried to contract a marriage with a *shinpi* family of good descent without waiting for the result of the government enquiry, the Peshwa ordered the marriage to be suspended and the order was duly executed.[43]

These examples reveal that internal splits often took place within a caste due to various reasons, such as change in social practice and occupation, development of different pedigrees in the same caste and so forth, and that disputes arose between these divided groups and when these disputes could not be solved within the caste itself, they would be referred to the government for settlement. The government decided such cases on the basis of certain evidences, and thus spontaneous and often obscure caste splits would be confirmed and systematized.

2. *Code of Behaviour and Ranking*

The Maratha government not only confirmed obscure caste splits, it also sometimes tried to suggest, formulate and enforce certain code of behaviour to be observed by members of a caste or of different castes in their social intercourse. We will now turn to this topic.

Regarding the code of conduct for Brahmins we have already shown that the government tried to separate from the main body of the Yajurvedi Brahmins caste that section which practised cross-cousin marriage in the Bassein region. In the same region, another caste of Brahmins (Samavedi Brahman) was ordered by the government in 1753 that they should recite holy words after performing ablution, and conduct themselves according to the *dharma* of Brahmins; otherwise they would be punished.[44] Again when a dispute took place among Brahmin priests in the holy places of Nasik and Trinbak regarding the order in which different parts of the Vedas are to be recited by them, the government invited to a meeting (*sabha*) in Poona for discussion representative Brahmin priests from many holy places all over India. The meeting decided that the first to be recited should be Rigveda, the second Taitriya (a part of Yajurveda), then Vajasaniya and Katyayana (both a part of Yajurveda), and the last of all Samaveda and Atharvaveda. The government accordingly ordered Brahmins of the two holy places 'to follow this precedence. Those who defy it would be punished according to law books (*shastra*).'[45] When another dispute arose among the Brahmins of Nasik in 1779, the government invited their representatives to Poona, got them to consent to a code of conduct (unfortunately no details are shown) to be followed by all Brahmins of the place. A copy of this agreement (*tahanama*) was sent to the local bureaucrats, hereditary officers and the representatives of five Brahmin castes of the region, and it enjoined that the contents of the agreement should be given effect to.[46]

While the government would thus suggest and formulate certain code of behaviour for the Brahmins, it also assured that they enjoyed the highest social status. This was ensured by expressly forbidding the lower castes to imitate many details of social practice and custom in use among the Brahmins. For instance, the lower castes were prohibited by the government from wearing the sacred thread (*janaven*)[47] or from performing certain specific rites[48]—both allowed only to the Brahmins. Especially interesting is that the government commanded the

prabhu kayastha caste (important literate caste next only to the Brahmins) to behave like Shudras. In the year 1790, the Brahmins of Pen town, Saksen district appealed to the central government that the *prabhus* in the privacy of their houses indulged in enjoying some privileges allowable to the Brahmins only and they requested the government to look into the matter. Thereupon the government first re-confirmed the code of conduct (*karmacharan*) which consisted of nine items that had been formulated for the *prabhu* caste by the government during the reign of the fifth Peshwa and agreed upon by the then representative *prabhus*. Then on that basis ninety-five order-letters were sent to the local bureaucrats and one hundred to the representative Brahmins all over the kingdom. In the letter the recipients were commanded to ensure that the *prabhus* strictly conformed to the code and to punish the defiant. This code of conduct stipulated that the *prabhus* should not recite Vedic *mantras* in their ceremonies; that they should not pronounce the Vedic *mantras* they knew; that they should recite only Puranic *mantras* in their prayers; that they should visit only such temples as were visited by the Shudras; that they should use among themselves and also when they meet any Brahmins the greeting word *dandvat* (greeting word used by the Brahmins being *namaskar*, that used by the Shudras *dandvat*, and that used by the untouchables *johar*); that they should not employ any Brahmins as their servants; that they should not oppose the re-marriage of widows in their caste (contrary to the custom among the Brahmins which prohibited the re-marriage of their widows); and so on.[49]

The same policy of clarifying the distinctions between castes was applied to the untouchables. We find three such documents issued during the regime of the seventh Peshwa.

The first document of May 1784 states that the government formulated seven rules of worship at the holy place of Pandharpur and it ordered the bureaucrat of the place to make sure that they were observed, which contained this: 'there is a stone-image of Chokhamela (untouchable saint of the fourteenth century) to the north of the (main) temple (dedicated to Vithoba, an incarnation of Vishnu), and there the untouchables (*atishudra*)

frequent for worship. The place is so narrow and crowded that the visitors cannot avoid bodily contact with each other, and the Brahmins are opposed to this. Therefore the untouchables should perform their worship from near the stone-lamp (in front) of the image of Chokhamela or from a nearby untouchable hamlet (*mahar vada*). They should not approach the temple (of Vithoba). Those who do shall be punished.'[50]

The second record indicates that the government forced the untouchable castes (*mahars, mangs*, and *chambhars*) of a village to demolish their huts which were located too near the periphery of the village, and made them build their huts, anew in some other place by giving them some money and timbers.[51]

The third record reveals that not all the untouchables accepted such discriminations as their predestined fate; some of them demanded a better treatment. The record dated 6 June 1786 states the following story. The *mahars* in the Konkan region demanded that some Brahmin priests of the place should officiate at their marriage ceremonies, and this demand was supported by the local bureaucrat. The priests rejected this demand by saying that according to ancient practice (*puratan chal*) marriages among the untouchables were not to be officiated by Brahmin but by untouchable priests (*medhe mahar*), and that a new practice (*navin chal*) should not be started. The local bureaucrat who had been supporting the demand of the untouchables forcibly attached the office of the Brahmin priests who then appealed the case to the Poona government. The government summoned for making an enquiry the hereditary officers (*jamidar*) and priests of the place who said in their evidence that there was no tradition of the Brahmins officiating marriages of the untouchables. On the other hand, a Brahmin priest of Junnar region on hearing this story by chance wrote to the Poona government to say that when his region was under the Mughals some thousands of untouchables made a similar demand and appealed to Emperor Aurangzeb to put it into effect. The Emperor made an enquiry into the custom and decided against this demand, and that since then this decision was being observed in Jumar. Accordingly

the Poona government decided, 'whereas this ancient custom was neither violated nor innovated even under the former Mughal rule, it is quite improper now to threaten (the priests) and enforce a new practice in our Maratha kingdom (*svarajya*)' (*magen moglai amalant hi puratan chal modun naven kelen nastan svarajya tuhmin agraha karun navin chal karnen anuchit*). The government reprimanded the local bureaucrat and ordered him to restore the attached office to the priests on the one hand, and on the other, commanded the untouchables to have their marriages officiated by their own priests, and threatened them that 'if they trouble the Brahmin priests in the future, the result would not be good for them.'[52]

In short, it may be said that there was a demand even among the untouchables for a better treatment, and that it was *ultimately* the state power that suppressed such demands and kept them in the lowest position in the society.

IV. CONCLUSION

The above discussion may have made it clear, at least partly, that so far as the eighteenth century Maratha kingdom was concerned, the state played a vital role in caste-matters: from the forfeiture and restoration of caste-status of individuals to the division of caste, the formulation of caste-code, and the stabilization of caste distinctions. In other words, the caste system in this kingdom was not only a self-contained autonomous social order of the people, it was also an order of society protected, controlled and stabilized by the government.

There seem to have been certain practical as well as ideological reasons for the state protection of the system. First, there was an administrative reason: the government utilized this system for punishing the misdemeanants by depriving them of their caste-status. Second, the financial reasons: the government received some money from the people concerned with the revival of their caste-status; for the arbitration of their caste disputes also the people had to pay. The government extracted certain regular forced labour (*vethbegar*) from artisan and professional

castes.[53] And third, there was, above all, certain ideological traditionalistic reason which was sometimes indicated by the concept of *dharma* (see section III of this essay). According to the traditional Hindu concept, rulers were morally bound to protect and maintain the status-order of society,[54] and the Maratha rulers were no exception.[55] I am not though prepared to extend the same argument to other kingdoms of medieval India. The social history of those kingdoms is yet to be studied. It is highly significant however that even the allegedly bigoted Muslim Emperor Aurangzeb seems to have adopted this same traditional attitude towards the caste-matters of his Hindu subjects as indicated above (see p. 106). At any rate it may be said that as long as the state power was vitally involved in maintaining the caste system, its stability and continuity would be strengthened.

Not to speak of other kingdoms of medieval India, even with regard to British India the legal aspect of the caste system or the history of the system itself has not yet been studied in depth. To conclude this essay, a few words on the caste system in Maharashtra during the British period may be said.

Surveys of castes conducted during the first half of the present century show: (1) Dyers (*rangaris*) and Namdev tailors have indeed become two of the endogamous sub-castes of the tailor caste,[56] while the indigo dyers (*nilaris*), who were also separated from both the tailors and the dyers by the government have amalgamated completely with the dyers and the two terms (*nalari* and *rangari*) have become synonyms.[57] (2) Although the *prabhus* were forbidden by the Maratha government to adopt the practice and privileges of the Brahmins, they have indeed adopted many of them.[58] The Brahmins, exhorted by the government to practise the strictest code of conduct, have relaxed some parts of it and started intermarriage between different castes of Brahmins.[59]

More recently some lower castes have been changing their names and custom and adopting those of higher ones. The peasant caste (*kunbi*) has largely disappeared and been assimilated into the higher Maratha caste.[60] Conflicts and even fighting

between the untouchables and higher castes, and many other such cases have started.[61] In short the caste system and especially the inter-caste relations seem to have got more or less confused in the modern period as compared with the Maratha time.*

NOTES

1. For instance, see N. K. Dutt, *Origin and Growth of Caste in India*, vol. 1, London, 1931, p. 3. J. H. Hutton, *Caste in India*, 3rd ed., Oxford University Press, 1961, p. 49. I. Karve, *Hindu Society, An Interpretation* , Poona, 1961, pp. 15–16. E. R. Leach (ed.), *Aspects of Caste in South India, Ceylon and North-West Pakistan*, Cambridge University Press, 1962, pp. 1–10.
2. Briefly see J. H. Hutton, op. cit., pp. 170–82.
3. A. M. T. Jackson, 'Note on the History of the Caste System', *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, New Series, vol. 3, no. 7, 1907, pp. 509–15.
4. J. H. Hutton, op. cit., pp. 93–7. For the function of Bengal Navabs over caste affairs of the subjects, see A. C. Patra, *The Administration of Justice under the East India Company in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa*, Asia Publishing House, 1962, p. 22.
5. For instance, A. S. Altekar, *The Rashtrakutas and Their Times*, Poona, 1934, pp. 317–58. B. P. Mazumdar, *Socio-Economic History of Northern India (1030–1194 AD.)*, Calcutta, 1960, pp. 77–115. T. K. Raichaudhuri, *Bengal under Akbar and Jahangir*, Calcutta, 1953, pp. 168ff. D. Desai, *The Mahamandaleshwaras under the Calukyas of Kalyani*, Bombay, 1951, pp. 415ff. K. N. Seth, 'Some Aspects of Social Life as Described in Early Medieval Inscriptions', *Indian Culture*, vol. 14, no. 2, 1947, pp. 51–60.
6. K. T. Telang discussed that the Maratha government widely interfered in the caste affairs of the people and that the kings, ministers and their high-class officials were rather loose in observing their own caste rules. See K. T. Telang, 'Gleanings from Maratha Chronicles', 1892, in M. G. Ranade, *Rise of the Maratha Power*, Bombay, 1900, chap. XIII (Appendix). This essay is interesting, but was written before the major source material of the period was published, nor is it well documented. Therefore I have ignored this in my essay.

7. These nine volumes will be abbreviated as *SSRPD* in subsequent footnotes. In regard to them, see M. G. Ranade, 'Introduction to the Peshwa's Diaries', *Journal of Bombay Branch of the Asiatic Society*, vol. 20, 1920; reprinted in *Shivaji and the Rise of the Mahrattas*, ed. by Susil Gupta Ltd., Calcutta, 1953, pp. 53–86. Also see G. S. Sardesai, *Hand-Book to the Records in the Alienation Office Poona*, Bombay Government, 1933.
8. These source-books will be abbreviated as *SPD* in the subsequent footnotes. About them, see J. N. Sarkar, *Foreword to the Selections from the Peshwa Daftar*, Bombay Government, 1933.
9. This book will be abbreviated as *Oturkar* in the footnotes.
10. *SSRPD*, vol. 1, nos. 373, 384; vol. 2, no. 323; vol. 8, nos. 1122, 1136. *SPD*, vol. 43, nos. 25, 107, 140. *Oturkar*, no. 180. They are the cases where the conversions took place in distant places, and the converts thus having lost their caste later returned home in repentance and applied for the restoration of their caste-status. The names of certain sects are not mentioned. (*SSRPD*, vol. 1, no. 384; vol. 2, no. 323.)
11. *SSRPD*, vol. 1, no. 396; vol. 2, no. 316; vol. 7, no. 350. *SPD*, vol. 43, no. 168. *Oturkar*, nos. 154–7.
12. *SPD*, vol. 43, nos. 131, 134, 151, 162. *Oturkar*, no. 178.
13. *SSRPD*, vol. 1, no. 388; vol. 2, no. 333; vol. 7, no. 765. *Oturkar*, no. 173.
14. *SPD*, vol. 43, no. 29. *SSRPD*, vol. 8, no. 1127.
15. A Brahmin addicted to drinking (*SPD*, vol. 43, no. 159), a Brahmin committing animal sacrifice (Ibid., vol. 23, no. 11), and a Brahmin possessed by an evil spirit (*SSRPD*, vol. 8, no. 1114). Other cases are found in Ibid., vol. 1, nos. 382, 383; vol. 2, no. 314; *Oturkar*, no. 177.
16. *SSRPD*, vol. 8, no. 1136. *SPD*, vol. 43, nos. 25, 107, 140.
17. *SSRPD*, vol. 7, nos. 597, 767. *Oturkar*, no. 171.
18. *SSRPD*, vol. 7, no. 722. *Oturkar*, nos. 175, 176.
19. Brahmins who either sold their daughter for marriage or did not get her married after a certain age (e.g. nine) (*SSRPD*, vol. 5, no. 241), or Brahmin who concluded a marriage with another Brahmin who had been deprived of his caste by government. (Ibid., vol. 8, no. 1133).
20. *SPD*, vol. 43, no. 154.
21. *SSRPD*, vol. 8, no. 1128. This is Manbhau sect that was prohibited from missionary activities and whose members were declared

to lose their caste by the Government in June of 1782 for the reason that they destroyed Hindu temples and idols, shaved their heads in their own way, and wore their own special clothes. Regarding the sect, see I. M. P. Raeside, 'A Bibliographical Index of Mahanubhava Works in Marathi', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, University of London, vol. 23, part 3, 1960, pp. 464–507.

22. Two Brahmins who disputed over the kinship relation among themselves and failed to attain an agreement. (*SPD*, vol. 43, no. 168. *SSRPD*, vol. 7, no. 535.) A Brahmin who officiated a marriage ceremony without knowing that the girl had been kidnapped. (*SSRPD*, vol. 8, no. 119.)
23. *SSRPD*, vol. 8, no. 1124.
24. Ibid., vol. 7, nos. 535, 597, 767. *SPD*, vol. 43, nos. 25, 140. *Oturkar*, nos. 171, 175.
25. See *SSRPD*, vol. 8, no. 1133.
26. *SPD*, vol. 43, no. 140. No mention is made as to what consequently happened to this couple. They may have migrated to other place and become Muslims forever.
27. Ibid., vol. 43, no. 154.
28. Ibid., vol. 43, no. 168.
29. Ibid., vol. 43, no. 17.
30. Ibid., vol. 43, nos. 25, 140.
31. Ibid., vol. 43, no. 78.
32. Ibid., vol. 43, nos. 25, 140. *SSRPD*, vol. 8, no. 1122.
33. *SSRPD*, vol. 2, nos. 314, 316, 333; vol. 7, no. 765; vol. 8, no. 750.
34. This point cannot, however, be generalized, for not all the records concerned with the revival make mention of payment. Moreover, there is a case where the government gave Rs 200 to a Brahmin to meet the expenditure for his purification (Ibid., vol. 2, no. 323).
35. V. T. Gune, *Judicial System of the Marathas*, Poona, 1953, pp. 38, 44–6, 73–86.
36. *SSRPD*, vol. 2, no. 317. '*Shankaraji Keshav namjad Vasai yashin patra kin, Ranchhod Naik Vaidya vastavya prant majkur yanin hujur vidit kelen kin, purvin firangan prantin Yajurvedi Brahman hote tyant kityekannin sanmat deun, mamanchi kanya bhachyas dyavi aisen karun, eka doghannin sharirsanbandh hi kele. tyans atan dharmarajya jhalen. dharmashastra pahatan hen ayogya karm, yakaritan jo aisen karm karil tyajavalun dand rupaye 50 pannas gheun yati vegla karava hmanun vinanti keli. tyajavarun*

hen patra tuhmas lihilen ahe. tari firangan prantin Yajurvedi Brahman jo aisen karm karil tyajavalun sadarhu rupaye pannas gunhegari sarkarani gheun yati veglen karnen. ya patrachi prati lehun gheun asal patra Vaidya majkur yajaval bhogavatiyas denen hmanun sanad 1.'

37. The prohibition of cross-cousin marriage, however, has not always been observed throughout India. At least in south India such marriages have been practised since ancient period, and some Hindu jurists of ancient and medieval India were inclined to regard it as legitimate. Vide P. V. Kane, *History of Dharmashastra*, Poona, 1941, vol. 2, part 1, pp. 452ff.
38. *SSRPD*, vol. 7, no. 763. '*yajla changle jatint soyrika karavyacha sanbandh nahin; kadu jatint vartaven. . . . tumhi yaupari kadu jaticha got patakarun changle jatint koni gheun naye kadu jatinen changle jatint vartu naye.*'
39. *SSRPD*, vol. 1, no. 375. '*shinpi va rangari yancha insaf honen ahe, yabadal tyanche gharin lagna, muhurta, karya, prayojana mana kelen. karya prayojana houn na denen.*'
40. *Oturkar*, no. 137. '*sipi ragari va nilari yache jaticha kajiya padon peshji Shrimat kailasvasi Shahu Maharaja yani insaf karun Namdev sipi ahet tyani sivane vagaire udim karun asave sipi ason ragari-panache kasab karitat tyas nirale thevave va nilari yas anna vyavaharadi samadh karun naye yapramane rajpatra karun dilhi asta sipi ragari va nilari yekatra houn paraspare soyerika karitat mhanun hujur vidit jale yaishas sadarhuchi chauksi karavi lagti tar tumchi vartanuk kasi ahe ti tapasilvar lehun pathavne.*'
41. A. L. Srivastava, *Medieval Indian Culture*, Agra, 1964, pp. 69–70.
42. *SPD*, vol. 43, no. 41.
43. Ibid., vol. 43, no. 54.
44. *SSRPD*, vol. 2, no. 328. '*tyavarun ya Samavedi Brahmanannin snanasandhya karun Brahmana-dharmache ritipramanen achaaran karaven. na karil tyas shasan karaven.*'
45. *SPD*, vol. 43, no. 69.
46. *SSRPD*, vol. 8, no. 1121. Five castes of Brahmins mentioned here are *deshastha*, *chitpavan*, *karhade*, *yajurvedi* and *kanva*.
47. Ibid., vol. 2, no. 324.
48. *SPD*, vol. 43, no. 108.
49. *SSRPD*, vol. 8, no. 1144. But Government allowed the *prabhus* to perform thread-ceremony in 1797 which had been forbidden to them for some years (Ibid., vol. 5, no. 235).

50. Ibid., vol. 8, no. 1129. '*devalayache baher Chokhamelyacha dagad uttareche angen ahe, tethen atishudra darshanas yetat. jagasankoch galichi ahe. tethen janaran yenarans sparshasparsh hoto, he brahmanans viruddh yastav atishudrantin Chokhamelyache dipamalejaval athva mahar vadyant sthal asel tethen puja karit javi. devalayajaval atishudra yeun naye. koni ala tari paripatya karaven.*'
51. Ibid., vol. 8, no. 1142.
52. Ibid., vol. 8, no. 1132.
53. See chap. 6 of this book.
54. See, for instance, K. V. Rangaswami Aiyangar, *Aspects of the Social and Political System of Manusmriti*, Lucknow University, 1949, pp. 117, etc.
55. G. S. Sardesai, *The Main Currents of Maratha History*, revised ed., Bombay, 1949, pp. 18–19.
56. R. E. Enthoven, *The Tribes and Castes of Bombay*, Bombay, 1920, vol. 3, p. 327.
57. Ibid., vol. 3, pp. 135, 301.
58. R. V. Russell, *The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India*, London, 1916, vol. 4, pp. 399, 402.
59. Ibid., vol. 2, p. 393.
60. I. Karve, *Hindu Society, An Interpretation*, Poona, 1961, pp. 44–7.
61. G. S. Ghurye, *Caste, Class and Occupation*, Bombay, 1961, pp. 230–8.

* After writing this essay I saw W. C. McCormack's 'Caste and the British Administration of Hindu Law', *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1, January 1966, pp. 32 and 33 of which are relevant to my point (30 May 1968).

CHAPTER 5 : SOME ASPECTS OF SLAVERY (GHULAM AND KUNBINA)*

I. INTRODUCTION

When the British conquered most of the Indian sub-continent in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, they found there the prevalence of slavery among the inhabitants,in which slaves were owned, inherited, sold or gifted. A number of early British officials reported on this usage to their superiors. On the basis of early British evidence D. R. Banaji wrote a book on the slavery as found in the early British India, from which we may note the following points to start our discussion.

First, according to a very rough estimate made by Banaji, the slave population around the year 1841 was about four million in Bengal Presidency, about four million in Bombay and Madras Presidencies, and altogether about sixteen million in the entire sub-continent.[1]

Second, whereas some of the slaves were brought to India by merchants from the east coast of Africa and Nepal,[2] most of them were native inhabitants of India. The slave population included captives in wars,[3] criminals sold off by the East India Company's government,[4] children disposed of by their impoverished parents, wives sold off by their husbands, those who had sold themselves,[5] those who had been illegally kidnapped and sold,[6] and those who had become slaves of their creditors for a certain number of years or for life.[7]

* This article first appeared in Japanese in *HR*, vol. 45, no. 6, 1961 and then reproduced as ch. 5 of *SSEHI* (1972). A slightly modified English version appeared under the title of 'Some Aspects of Slavery in the Eighteenth-century Maratha Kingdom' in *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, Kansai University of Foreign Studies, Osaka, 1974.

Third, slaves were used not only for domestic services but also often for cultivation of land.[8]

Fourth, in the Deccan, with which this article is mainly concerned, a report of 1822 mentions, 'throughout the Deccan slavery was very prevalent'.[9] In 1832 it was reported that there were fifteen thousand slaves in the Southern Maratha Country alone, and there 'all the jageerdars, deshwars, zemindars, principal brahmins and sahookars retain slaves on their domestic establishments, in fact in every Maratha household of consequence they are to be found, and indeed are considered as indispensable'.[10] Some female slaves were bought by dancing women and they were trained to be dancers and musicians.[11]

And fifth, early British evidences do not enumerate the causes of enslavement in the Deccan, but we find cases of impoverished men selling their wives, children, even themselves,[12] children kidnapped and sold into slavery,[13] and debtors becoming slaves of their creditors.[14] Here too they were used not only for domestic services but also for agriculture.[15]

These abstracts from Banaji's book may indicate that the slave population increased due to the political and economic unrests in the process of the British conquest. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that a fairly large population of slaves already existed before the establishment of British rule in India and that slavery was not a new phenomenon in Indian history. Indeed, slavery seems to have been an established social system in India since the ancient period. For instance, the Code of Manu declares, 'there are seven kinds of slaves (*dāsa*): enslaved captives of wars, those who became slaves for the sake of food, those who are born to female slaves, those who are bought as slaves, those who are gifted as slaves, those who are inherited as slaves from the ancestors, and those who are enslaved by royal punishment'.[16] Islamic law also recognized the enslavement of non-Muslims who were captured in wars.[17]

Slavery was thus recognized both by the Hindu and Islamic legal systems and was in fact widely found when the British established their rule in India. There are several interesting modern works on the system as was prevalent in ancient India.[18]

However, how the system functioned in the state and society of pre-British medieval India has hardly been discussed for any part of the sub-continent. This article is an attempt at analysing, on the basis of about ninety Marathi records of the time, the slave system as it prevailed in the eighteenth-century Maharashtra. In these records male slaves are called *gulam* and female ones *kunbina* or *batika*. Of infant slaves, including those who accompanied female slaves, boys are called *porga* or *por*, and girls *porgi* or *pori*. That the two terms which meant female slaves (*kunbina* and *batika*) were used interchangeably is supported by some cases where the same female slave was referred to by both the terms.[19]

Two more points should be noted. First, out of the ninety records, only six refer to male slaves. At the moment it is not possible to be sure whether this small number of records pertaining to male slaves is due to some procedure of compiling source-materials or it is to be taken to suggest that male slaves were in fact much fewer than female ones. At any rate this article can discuss mainly the female slaves and only occasionally the males. Second, our records do not reveal all causes of enslavement. One of the causes—the charge of illicit sexual relation brought against women who were arrested and enslaved by the government—will be discussed later. Another cause was kidnapping, although it was prohibited by the government.[20] It may be presumed that those who were enslaved for these reasons were few; most of the slaves were degraded to this state for economic reasons, although there is no reliable evidence to support this presumption.

I. GOVERNMENT AND SLAVERY

A prominent feature of slavery in the eighteenth-century Maratha kingdom is that it was not confined to private use only among the people; it was also recognized, supported and made use of by the government. We shall confine our attention to female slaves and examine the role of government in the system.

Creation of Female Slaves

As mentioned before, the government would arrest female adulterers, and turn them into 'slaves of government' (*sarkarchi kunbina*) or sell them out as slaves to those who wanted them.[21] To be sure, not all female adulterers were enslaved. There are cases where relatives or caste-fellows of a woman appealed to the government and got her released by paying a fine or offering a substitute female slave.[22] There are also cases where a woman was simply imprisoned or she was meted out some bodily injury, and then released.[23] But when a woman had no such relatives, or was unable to pay the required amount of fine, or when a woman repeated the same offence, she would be enslaved as a rule.

It seems, however, that Brahmin women were not enslaved, for a Brahmin widow who repeated the offence of illicit sexual relation was deprived of her caste permanently (*ghatasphot*) by the government, but not enslaved.[24] There may have been some legal provisions (such as those in Brihaspati and Katyayana Codes) against the enslavement of Brahmins.[25]

At any rate the government would enslave female adulterers with the possible exception of Brahmin women. But there is no evidence to show that men were also enslaved for the same reason.

Owning, Selling and Transferring of Female Slaves

In the courts, forts and many other departments of the government were employed a number of what was called 'female slaves of government'. At least one hundred and ninety-seven female slaves worked in the courts and various departments of the government at Poona in 1763.[26] Every aristocratic family seem to have been served by something like ten female slaves.[27] A number of female and infant slaves in the forts[28] were used for various kinds of work as will be discussed later.

The government would buy and sell slave women and children.[29] It was not uncommon for the government to give some

of them to officials in lieu of a part of their salary. Sometimes a distinguished official would be given a slave woman or two as a reward.[30]

The government levied a purchase-tax (*jakat*) from private buyers of slaves, arrested the absconding slaves and returned them to their owners; it would also capture 'wandering slave women' (*chukari batika*, whose owners could not be ascertained) and force them to become government slaves.[31]

Emancipation (sod) *of Government Slave Women*

Not all slave women of the government were kept in slavery for life. When a woman slave was unable to work due to old age she would often be granted an 'emancipation letter' (*sodpatra, sodchithi*) and set at liberty.[32] Sometimes aged or crippled slave women were also set free on the government's receiving some emancipation fee (*sodkharch*) or if substitutive slaves were supplied to the government.[33] As will be mentioned later, female slaves were paid annual wage by the government, and it was possible for a slave to save it and eventually pay the emancipation fee or buy the substitutive slave to win her own freedom. The emancipation letter usually ends with the phrases, 'go wherever you like and live happily. The government will not obstruct you.' It is not clear how they lived after emancipation. A case is known however of an aged slave woman who had served the court and was granted some land at the time of her emancipation.[34]

The government role in slavery will be further discussed in a later section on treatment of slaves.

II. OWNERS OF SLAVES

The slave trade was transacted either indirectly through some intermediate merchants called *charan* or *bhanjari* or directly between the sellers and buyers. Apart from the government, what kind of people owned the slaves? Sixty-five records show the following owners.

	Number
A. Sixty-five Owners of Female Slaves	
1. Brahmin non-officials (such as *deshpandes*, village accountants, *joshis*, *upadhyas*)	20
2. Brahmin officials	2
3. Maratha non-officials (such as *deshmukhs*, village headmen, peasants)	7
4. Maratha officials	4
5. A *prabhu kayastha* non-official	1
6. A tailor of *shinpi* caste	1
7. A weaver of *koshthi* caste	1
8. A gardener of *mali* caste	1
9. Officials whose castes are not clear	9
10. Female slaves serving the courts	3
11. A female official serving the court	1
12. Non-officials whose castes are not clear	9
13. A dancing girl whose caste is not clear	1
14. A Muslim official	1
15. A Muslim non-official	1
16. A British resident	1
17. A British soldier serving the Maratha government	1
18. A French resident	1
B. Six Owners of Male Slaves	
1. Brahmin non-officials	3
2. Maratha non-officials	2
3. A non-official whose caste is not clear	1
C. Fifteen Owners of Infant Slaves	
1. Brahmin non-officials	2
2. A Maratha official	2
3. Maratha non-officials	3
4. Non-officials whose castes are not clear	4
5. An official whose caste is not clear	1
6. Dancing girls whose castes are not clear	3
7. A British resident	1

Those who are called officials in the above list were not always high class officials of the central government. Several district officials, revenue collectors, clerks and horsemen are also called

'official'. There were a number of Brahmins and Marathas among these officials and non-officials whose castes cannot be ascertained. As for those who are called non-officials, in many cases no information is given in our records about their specific occupation. It is possible that in this group some officials were also included. The number of slaves and infants owned by an owner was usually not many, but in one instance a *deshmukh* owned thirteen male slaves.

The following points seem to emerge from the above table. First, male slaves were mostly owned by members of the high castes such as Brahmins and Marathas, and it was among them that keeping slaves was common. Second, female slaves were, however, owned and kept not primarily by people belonging to the high castes, but also by those among the intermediate castes like tailors, weavers and gardeners. And third, it is not clear whether the untouchables also could own slaves in case they could afford to. To be sure female slaves at the court whose castes are not clear owned slave women. But female slaves employed inside the court buildings could not be untouchables. This point will be discussed later in connection with the services performed by slaves.

III. SLAVES AND CASTES (JATI)

What happened to the castes of slaves? Did they lose their castes and form themselves into a separate status of slavery? That does not appear to be the case. Generally, a slave seems to have retained his caste during the slavery period also. We have no knowledge on this point about male slaves, but there is some evidence regarding female slaves.

According to one such evidence, the government gave to a clerk three 'female slaves of good caste' (*batki changlya jativant*).[35] Another record states that a female slave who had served a Brahmin family 'was later found to be a woman of leather-worker caste (*jatichi chanbharina*). Without knowing it the Brahmin family was in contact with her (*sansarg ticha vadla*)

for four months. Therefore the Brahmin and the people living in his family are to receive a purificatory ceremony,' so the government ordered.[36] It is clear from the above examples that female slaves, like any free people, were in fact treated or were expected to be treated with discrimination by the government and society according to the rank of their castes.

The castes of female slaves specified in our records are:

1. Women of *prabhu kayastha* caste[37]
2. Women of Maratha caste[38]
3. Women of goldsmith caste[39]
4. Women of gardener caste[40]
5. Women of blacksmith caste[41]
6. Women of shepherd caste[42]
7. Women of leatherworker caste[43]
8. Women of *koli* tribe[44]
9. Muslim women[45]
10. Siddi women[46]

This list shows that, with the possible exception of Brahmin women as mentioned before, women of all castes, tribes and religious communities could become slaves and were taken to retain their respective castes. In other words, the position of female slavery was not a closed, homogeneous one, but was open to different castes; it was an additional, unfree position which was added to the enslaved person who had already been subject to the principle of inequality so essential to the caste system. Why female slaves did not form into a homogeneous status group but retained their respective castes seems to have had strong connection with the kind of service they rendered. This will be discussed later.

As there were ordinary people who had lost their caste, similarly there were female slaves who had no caste. For instance, a female slave who had sexual relation with a man who was not of her caste was 'deprived of her caste' (*jatikherij*) by the government.[47] Services performed by such a slave woman will also be discussed later.

IV. SLAVES AND MARRIAGE

Only three records have been found pertaining to the problem of marriage of slaves. According to a record of the year 1752, the government commanded a village headman as follows:

> As (the government obtained the news that) Mr Bahirji Dhapte got his male slave to marry the daughter of your female slave, the government summoned him (Mr Dhapte), for it is improper for a male slave to be married to the other woman (*dusri*). As soon as you see this order-letter, you should report to the government.[48]

The word '*dusri*' is the feminine form of '*dusra*', which means 'other', or 'another' or 'second'. If we take it to mean 'other', this record indicates that the government disapproved of the marriage of male slaves. But if we accept the second meaning of the word, it suggests that the government prohibited the remarriage or bigamy of male slaves. As this is the only evidence on the marriage of male slaves, we cannot be definite on the point; but my impression is that the first meaning was intended, for the phrase 'children born to female slaves' often appears in our records as we will see later, while the expression 'children of male slaves' is not found in them to the best of my knowledge. If a male slave as such was not allowed to conclude a legal marriage even with a female slave, it means that the reproduction of slave population among slaves was prohibited. This is an interesting point and should be examined when more evidences on the matter are available.[49]

According to the second record of the year 1774, the government gave the following order to an official serving in the government stable: 'Last year you gave in marriage Bibu, daughter of a Muslim female slave named Jaini, under the charge of your stable, to a Muslim at Kendur. You should therefore register the emancipation fee (you received from them at that time).'[50]

The third record of the year 1741 states that the government gave the following assurance letter to a woman named Esi:

Mr Ranoji Bhosle appealed to the government that you are the daughter of his female slave. Therefore you were summoned to the government, your statement examined, and it became clear that he had got you married. Accordingly, he can no longer hold you in female slavery or demand you (as his female slave). You may go wherever you like and live happily. No one is allowed to put obstacle to you.[51]

The following points emerge from the above two records. First, the daughter of a female slave was necessarily a female slave. Second, although female slaves, whether of the government or of private individuals, could be legally married, they had to be emancipated from the slavery at the time of wedding at the latest. And third, both the girls mentioned in the records seem to have been married to free men, for the Muslim man to whom Bibu was married is not called a slave, and Esi could go wherever she liked; she was married to a free man.

Thus these three records indicate that slaves, whether male or female, were not allowed to marry as long as they remained in slavery, that is marriage was regarded as a privilege of free men and women.

Incidentally female slaves often bore children to their owners, legally or illegally. Such children were called *dasiputra* in Sanskrit and *kadu* in Marathi, and they seem to have formed an inferior status group for themselves which was a sub-caste attached to the caste of their respective fathers.[52]

V. SERVICES OF SLAVES

Male slaves owned by private individuals seem to have been employed for cultivating land (*kunbavyachi jamin*) of their owners,[53] in addition to domestic services.[54] Since the records pertaining to male slaves are few, we shall below confine our discussion to female slaves.

As mentioned before, many female slaves were employed to work at the courts, various departments and forts of the government. At least thirty-five female slaves worked in the kitchen

(*mudapak kothi*) of the Peshwa government at Poona. Besides, some ten female slaves worked in each of the following government departments: stable (*paga*), granary (*jirayat khana*), cattle house (*thatti*), dancing house (*natakshala*), and store house (*karkol karkhana*).[55] Although what work they did in these places is not clear, the names of the departments give us some idea of the nature of their work. Female and infant slaves, held in the forts, were frequently employed for manufacturing ammunition at powder magazines (*darukhana*)[56] and for construction of buildings.[57]

Female slaves, owned by private individuals, were employed to do many kinds of domestic work inside and outside the house. For instance, a female slave belonging to a *prabhu kayastha* family (very high caste next to Brahmins in Konkan) did such work as 'sweeping in the house, pasting cow-dung on walls, washing tablewares after meals, cutting vegetables into pieces, spreading beddings and similar chores' for her owner who was a government official.[58] Another female slave serving for a Brahmin family fetched water from a rivulet.[59]

The caste background of a female slave was taken into consideration before the nature of work she would be asked to do was decided. At least two points were considered. One was the rank of her caste. As mentioned before, if a female slave of an untouchable caste worked inside an owner's house, she would pollute all members of his family.[60] Female slaves of 'clean castes' (*shuddh jati*) only could be employed to serve inside a house. Untouchable slaves worked outside the house e.g. for removing refuse. The second point considered was whether the female slave had not committed an impure act in the past, such as dining with members of other religion or lower caste. In case she had committed such an offence and had not received a purification, she would bring pollution to the family of her owner, however good her caste might be.[61]

In this way a female slave, and possibly the male also, was treated with discrimination, keeping in view the level of her caste as well as the purity of her past conduct, and the work was accordingly assigned . . . possibly the male also, slaves were not grouped into a homogeneous status.

As a matter of course, there were female slaves who were deprived of their castes as mentioned before. An instance is recorded in which such a female slave was employed in construction work at a fort;[62] such work could also be performed by casteless slaves. Thus we see that even in the state of slavery a slave's caste rank was important and it determined the nature of work she or he was likely to be given.

VI. TREATMENT OF SLAVES

As mentioned before, when the government arrested an absconding slave woman, she would be sent back to her owner. When she was a 'wandering slave woman' whose owner could not be ascertained, she was made a slave of the government. If anyone hid an absconding slave woman in his house and did not report the matter to the government, he would be fined.[63]

On the other hand, female slaves, both of the government and of private individuals, were often shackled (*bedi, kadi*) so as to prevent them from running away and making it easy to find them if they did.[64] As long as such fetters were practised it seems to have been quite difficult for slaves to run away. At any rate there was hardly any way for a slave to get rid of his (or her) bondage, except obtaining the emancipation from the owner through marriage with a free person.

It must be borne in mind, however, that one was not allowed to kill one's slave. If an owner killed his male slave he would be imprisoned[65] or suspended from enjoying his *watan* (hereditary right) by the government.[66] Penalty for killing someone else's female slave was imprisonment,[67] sometimes even capital punishment.[68] It was an established custom (*shirast*) to provide a female slave, whether of the government or of a private owner, with ration, every day (e.g. grains of a *ser* per day per head).[69] Both male and female slaves were given separate rooms or accommodation.[70] And female slaves of the government at least were given some money for clothes on important festivals;[71] they were also paid some pocket money (e.g. Rs 30) every year.[72] The clothes and money given them were regarded as their private property, for when a female slave of the government committed a-

crime, her clothes were confiscated by the government[73] as any free person's private property might have been. Some female slaves of the government themselves, as already mentioned, bought and maintained women slaves.[74]

In short, lives of slaves were in principle protected by the government like any free person's. They were provided by their owners with the minimum necessities, such as food, accommodation, and clothes. It seems that when the cost of maintaining any slave surpassed the benefits the owner drew from her, she would be sold out or emancipated.

VII. CONCLUDING REMARKS

When the Maratha kingdom was annexed to the British India in 1818, there must have been a large number of female and infant slaves at the courts, and various departments and forts of the past government. It is not clear what the British Deccan Commission of the East India Company did with them. It is however evident that the government of the Company recognized and supported until 1843, the private ownership of slaves, although a few legal provisions were enacted in several places now and then. Pressed by the public opinion in Britain as well as the reformist zeal inside the Company, the government promulgated Act V of 1843, which removed formally the official support from the slavery throughout British India. The Act consisted of four articles: (1) it refused to recognize slaves as disposable private property, (2) it refused to officially admit the private ownership of slaves, (3) it recognized the private property right of slaves, and (4) it provided the same protection against criminal offences to slaves as to ordinary free men.[75] It did not prohibit the ownership of slaves, nor did it order immediate emancipation of all slaves. Moreover, the third and fourth articles were virtually a legalization of the practice. Nevertheless, this Act was epoch-making in that it stopped governmental support to and recognition of slavery in its first and second articles. However, as the slavery itself was not prohibited it continued for some time to be a private custom in the society. What put an

end to it was the promulgation of Indian Penal Code of 1860, which prohibited the transaction and ownership of slaves and infants as criminal offences.[76]

Since 1860 slavery has disappeared from Indian society. But in its place has arisen the custom of retaining domestic servants which fulfil the economic functions previously performed by slaves.

NOTES

1. D. R. Banaji; *Slavery in British India*, 2nd ed., Bombay, 1933, pp. 195–203.
2. Ibid., pp. 73–8.
3. Ibid., pp. 37–9.
4. Ibid., pp. 68–9.
5. Ibid., pp. 4, 46, 66.
6. Ibid., p. 53.
7. Ibid., pp. 69–72.
8. Ibid., pp. 198, 200.
9. Ibid., p. 200.
10. Ibid., p. 200.
11. Ibid., p. 201.
12. Ibid., p. 4.
13. Ibid., p. 56.
14. Ibid., pp. 71–2.
15. Ibid., pp. 71–2.
16. Pandit Shri Hargovind Shastri annotated, *Manusmritih*, Chaukhamba Sanskrit Series, Banaras, 1952, Part 8, Article 415, p. 477.
17. Hammouda Ghoraba, 'Islam and Slavery' in *Islamic Quarterly*, ed. by Hammouda Ghoraba, vol. II, no. 3, London, October 1955, pp. 153–9.
18. e.g. N. C. Banerjee, 'Slavery in Ancient India' in *Calcutta Review*, August 1930; Shivnath Basu, 'Slavery in the Jatakas' in *Journal of Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, vol. IX; G. F. Iljin, 'Sudras und Sklaven in den altindischen Gesetzbuchern' in *Sowjetwissenschaft*, no. 2, Berlin, 1952; Dev Raj, *L'esclavage dans L'Inde ancienne d'apres les textes palis et sanscrits*, Pondicherry, 1957; W. Ruben, *Die Lage der Sklaven in der altindischen Gesellschaft*, Berlin, 1957.

19. G. C. Vad (prep.) *Selections from the Satara Raja's and the Peshwa's Diaries* (abbreviated as *SSRPD*) in the subsequent footnotes), Poona, 1906, vol. II, nos. 296, 299; G. S. Sardesai (ed.), *Selections from the Peshwa Daftar* (abbreviated as *SPD* in the subsequent footnotess), Bombay, 1934, vol. 43, nos. 13, 19.
20. *SPD*, vol. 43, no. 51. *SSRPD*, vol. V, no. 173.
21. *SSRPD*, vol. II, no. 103, vol. VIII, no. 1106. R. V. Oturkar (ed.), *Peshvekalin Samajik va Arthik Patravyavahar* (abbreviated as *Oturkar* in subsequent footnotes), Poona, 1950, no. 16.
22. *SSRPD*, vol. I, no, 370; vol. II, no. 101.
23. Ibid., vol. VIII, nos. 918, 920.
24. *SPD*, vol. 43, no. 168. The Maratha government declared it as opposed to Maharashtra *dharma* even to imprison a Brahmin female criminal for a long time. See *SSRPD*, vol. I, no. 379.
25. P. V. Kane, *History of Dharmashastra*, vol. I, Poona, 1930, p. 214; vol. II, part I, Poona, 1941, p. 186. But this point cannot be definite; at least in the British territories there were Brahmin slaves. For instance in 1780 Bombay City contained 189 slaves, of whom 32 were Brahmins, and in Mahim area of Bombay Island, out of 242 slaves, seven male and ten female slaves were Brahmins. See S. M. Edwardes, *The Rise of Bombay, A Retrospect*, Bombay, 1902, pp. 210–13.
26. *SSRPD*, vol. VII, no. 743.
27. Ibid., vol. I, no. 368; vol. III, no. 130; vol. IV, no. 76; vol. VII, no. 749; vol. VIII, no. 1097.
28. Ibid., vol. II, no. 305; vol. VII, no. 747.
29. Ibid., vol. II, nos, 290, 293, 308; vol. V, no. 233.
30. Ibid., vol. I, no, 372; vol. II, nos, 292, 294, 298, 299.
31. Ibid., vol. I, no. 367; vol. II, no. 300.
32. Ibid., vol. II, no. 301; vol. V, no. 233; vol. VIII, no. 1093.
33. Ibid., vol. VII, nos. 742, 745, 748; vol. VIII, no. 1107; *SPD*, vol. 43, no. 19.
34. *SSRPD*, vol. II, no. 291.
35. Ibid., vol. II, no. 298.
36. *SPD*, vol. 43, no. 92.
37. *SSRPD*, vol. VIII, no. 1125.
38. Ibid., vol. II, no. 103.
39. 'Sonarina Kunbina', ibid., vol. II, no. 301; no. VII, no 743; vol. VIII, no. 1106.
40. 'Malina', ibid., vol. VII, no. 743.

41. 'Loharina', ibid., vol. VII, no. 748.
42. 'Kunbina Dhangarina', *SPD*, vol. 43, no. 19. Regarding slave women of *ahir* caste, see *SSRPD*, vol. VII, no. 743.
43. *SPD*, vol. 43, no. 92.
44. 'Kunbina Kolina', *SSRPD*, vol. II, no. 294; vol. VII, no. 743.
45. 'Kunbina Musalmanina', ibid., vol. VI, no. 415; vol. VII, no. 743; vol. VIII, no. 1100.
46. 'Kunbina Shiddini', ibid., vol. VII, no. 747. Shiddis were the Muslims who had come from Ethiopia and settled down on the west coast of India.
47. Ibid., vol. VII, no. 1103.
48. 'Tujhe batkichi lek Rajshri Bahirji Dhapte yanin aplya gulamas keliyanimitt tyas Hujur anavilen kin dusrizas lagna karito aisa nadan dekhat adnyapatra Hujur yenen', ibid., vol. I, no. 371.
49. It is not clear whether the male slaves (*dasa*) could be married legitimately in ancient India. Seven kinds of slaves as shown in the Code of Manu, nine kinds of slaves in the Kautilya's *Artha-shastra*, and fifteen kinds of slaves as enumerated in the Code of Narada do not include the 'children of male slaves'. See Dev Raj, *L'esclavage dans l'Inde ancienne d'apres les textes palis et sanscrits*, Pondicherry, 1957, pp. 121–2. To be sure it is said that in Maha-bharata 'wife of male slave' and 'children of male slave' appear, but this seems to mean the wife and children whom a man had when he was a free man, and that when he was enslaved, his wife and children also belonged to his owner; this does not mean the wife and children whom a male slave had while he was a slave. See ibid., p. 108. According to D. R. Banaji, Cherumars of Malabar could be married, but they were 'serfs' rather than 'slaves'. But slaves in Bengal could marry, where a free woman married to a male slave became a female slave of his owner, while a free man married to a female slave became a male slave of her owner. But Banaji states that records showing this state of affairs are found only in Bengal, but neither in Madras nor in Bombay with which we are dealing here. See D. R. Banaji, *Slavery in British India*, op. cit., pp. 42, 100ff.
50. 'Tuhman kadil Pagentil Bibu porgi, Jaini kunbina Musalmamina ichi lek, hi Kendurche Musalmanas deun salgudast—tuhmi lagna kelen, sabab sodkharch lihinen', *SSRPD*, vol. VIII, no. 1100.
51. 'Rajshri Ranoji Bhosle yanin Hujur nivedan kelen kin aple kunbinichi porgi ahe tyavarun tujla Hujur anun karina manas

anitan masharnilhenin tujhen lagna kelen hoten yajkaritan tyanin tuhman kunbinint ghyaven aisen nahin. Yajkaritan tujla varsa tyas pohonchat nahin. Tujhya manas yeil tethen sukhrup rahnen. Tujla mujaila honyas konas sanbandh nahin', ibid., vol. I, no. 369.

52. Regarding the sub-caste of the children born to female slaves see ibid., vol. VII, no. 763. About their right to inheritance and so on, see ibid., vol. II, no. 44; vol. VI, no. 595; vol. VIII, no. 857; *Oturkar*, no. 124.
53. *SSRPD*, vol. II, no. 307; vol. VII, no. 595. A *deshmukh* owned five *bighas* of self-cultivating land and thirteen male slaves. Of course there were *deshmukhs* who had the arrangement of sharecropping (*vatekari*) with ordinary peasants. Ibid., vol. I, no. 325.
54. Ibid., vol. I, no. 285; vol. VIII, no. 908.
55. Ibid., vol. VII, no. 743.
56. Ibid., vol. II, no. 305; vol. VII, no. 747; vol. VIII, no. 1107.
57. Ibid., vol. VIII, no. 1103.
58. Ibid., vol. VIII, no. 1125.
59. Ibid., vol. VIII, no. 599.
60. *SPD*, vol. 43, no. 92.
61. *SSRPD*, vol. I, no. 399.
62. Ibid., vol. VIII, no. 1103.
63. Ibid., vol. II, no. 90
64. Ibid., vol. I, no. 372; vol. II, no. 90.
65. Ibid., vol. VIII, no. 884.
66. Ibid., vol. VII, no. 595.
67. Ibid., vol. VIII, no. 891.
68. Ibid., no. 888.
69. Ibid., vol. II, no. 305; vol. VIII, no. 988; vol. IX, no. 178; *SPD*, vol. 43, no. 13.
70. *SSRPD*, vol. I, no. 285; vol. III, no. 4.
71. Ibid., vol. VII, no. 742.
72. Ibid., no. 747.
73. Ibid., vol. IV, no. 76.
74. Ibid., vol. VII, nos. 748, 749; vol. VIII, nos. 1098, 1107.
75. For details see D. R. Banaji, *Slavery in British India*, op. cit., pp. 403–4.
76. H. S. Gour, *The Penal Law of India*, vol. II, Calcutta, 1910, Sections 370, 371.

CHAPTER 6: A NOTE ON THE CORVÉE SYSTEM (VETHBEGAR)*

I. INTRODUCTION

Since the late Professor D. D. Kosambi introduced a concept of feudalism in the study of Indian history,[1] several Indian historians have started serious work in terms of the 'feudal' structure of Indian society and state roughly from the sixth century onward, and many aspects of the structure seem to have been for the period up to the Muslim conquest. Professor R. S. Sharma, for instance, has pointed out several characteristics of feudalism in Indian history, such as the grant of lands to Brahmans and later to princes and bureaucrats, sub-infeudation of lands, existence of peasants as semi-serfs, excessive burden of taxation and imposition of forced labour upon peasants, and so on.[2]

Other historians of India who have likewise stressed that there was some form of feudalism in Indian polity during the early medieval period usually point out the existence of forced labour as one of its important aspects.[3] Indeed writers on Indian polity before the Muslim conquest almost always refer to the prevalence of a system of forced labour called *visti*.[4]

On the other hand, those scholars who have tried to prove the feudal structure of the political and economic life of India

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before the Muslim period do not always clearly express their opinion as to whether the Indian polity during later medieval period, extending from the thirteenth to the early nineteenth century, could also be called feudal, although the late Professor Kosambi has certainly affirmed the point.[5]

Discussion in the light of a concept of feudalism has hardly started regarding the later medieval period of Indian history, although some scholars like James Tod regarded long ago the structure of Rajput states in Rajasthan as a specific kind of feudalism,[6] whereas some historians like Dr Irfan Habib seem cautiously to avoid any use of it.

Whether the later medieval Indian polity can be better understood in terms of a concept of feudalism or not some scholars have pointed out that in various parts of India, corvée was widely prevalent. It was requisitioned by political authorities from subjects[7] along with exactions of regular revenues, tributes, and miscellaneous dues. But to the best of my knowledge, the exact nature of this custom of forced labour has not yet been studied for any part of India during the period.

In this paper an attempt will be made to examine the nature of this forced labour as it was practised in the directly-administered regions (*svarajya*) of the eighteenth century Maratha Confederacy. The examination will be based on some fifty contemporary records collected from various Marathi source-books that will be duly indicated in the footnotes.

Our attention will primarily be focused, firstly, on the relationship between forced labour and caste system, and secondly, on the freedom of people to migrate in the light of exactions of revenue, and so on.

Before we start this discussion let us be clear about a few points connected with the topic.

First, the corvée as practised in the eighteenth century Maratha *svarajya* was called either *begar* (a Persian term), or *veth* (derived from Sanskrit *visti*), or a compound of the two terms, *vethbegar*.

Second, some fifty records referred to above extend from 1720 to 1787 and cover all the major regions of *svarajya*;[8] it shows

the wide prevalence of this practice in the kingdom.

Third, the corvee shown in the source materials is that which was exacted from villages, and it is not clear whether cities, as distinct from villages, also bore the burden of regular forced service.

Fourth, forced service was not imposed on all people who did not participate in state power. For instance, not only the priestly Brahmans[9] but the secular ones also[10] (e.g. land-owners) were exempted from it by the government. Besides, *kasars* (brassworkers) of Saswad region to the south of Poona were permanently exempt from forced service, although why is not clear.[11] Other temporary exemption or reduction of it for some specific reasons will be mentioned later.

Fifth, the *svarajya* included temporarily assigned villages (*mokasa*, *jagir*, *saranjam*, etc.) to state bureaucrats as well as permanently alienated villages (*inam*) to *deshmukh* (hereditary chief of *pargana*), *deshpande* (hereditary accountant of *pargana*), important temples, eminent priests, distinguished servants of the state, and so on. And such villages may have formed about a quarter of the total number of the villages in the *svarajya*.[12] At any rate they were usually exempt from forced labour to the state, but they had to meet the demand for it from fief-holders or *inam*-holders as we will see from some references made later.[13]

And sixth, the general aspects of revenue system in this kingdom have been studied by Professor S. N. Sen[14] and in this paper reference will be made to it only when necessary. It should be borne in mind here that peasants had to pay the government a heavy land revenue, amounting sometimes to probably as high as two-thirds of the gross-produce.[15] Besides artisans and merchants who lived in villages, not to speak of towns and cities, had to pay the government business-tax called *mohatarfa*, and both peasants and village-artisans no doubt had to pay over and above this regular revenue and tax, various small dues, in kind or in cash, to the government, local bureaucrats (such as *mamledars*, *kamavisdars* and *khots*), as well as to the indigenous hereditary officers like *deshmukhs* and *deshpandes*. In other

words, corvée was exacted not in lieu of but in addition to such regular collections, usually in the peasants' slack season from October to March.

II. CORVÉE AND CASTE SYSTEM

We will first examine the kinds and amounts of forced labour and then try to find out the connection between these and the caste system on the basis of thirty records out of the fifty, which are rather specific in their content.

Kinds of Corvée

The thirty records may be itemized on the basis of various kinds of services as follows:

Item A. Seven records pertaining to corvée exacted for construction or repair of forts (*killa*), police-stations (*thana*), residences of local bureaucrats, and dams (*dharan*) for irrigation.

Item B. Six records about porterage (*hajir begar*) of grains, timbers and other goods of government.

Item C. Five records pertaining to corvée in cutting fodders (*gavat*) at government meadows (*sarkarcha kuran*) scattered in various places.

Item D. Five records concerned with miscellaneous jobs (*rabanuk or rabate*) at the local as well as the central government offices.

Item E. Two records related to miscellaneous jobs and saddlery at government stables (*hujur paga*).

Item F. One record on free service of watchmanship (*baithak vethbegar or choki vethbegar*) at market places (*bajar*).

Item G. Four records on forced labour in *inam* villages; three of them on construction of houses and one on porterage for the sake of *inamdar*.

The above itemization clearly shows that the government

imposed various kinds of forced labour on the people both at the centre and in the countryside. It also suggests that corvée was hardly used for the cultivation of state lands and directly-managed lands or demesne of *inamdar* in his *inam* villages.[16] Such lands were usually cultivated by share-croppers (*vatekari, ardheli*, etc.) or on a fixed rent.[17]

Amounts of Corvée

The amount of corvée requisitioned every year for construction and repair of forts, etc., as listed in Item A, does not seem to have been pre-fixed for each village. Rather the government pressed people into service for certain periods such as eight days or fifteen days[18] whenever it was needed provided it did not disturb their usual occupations.[19] It was the same with forced labour exacted by the holder of an *inam* village from his villagers as in Item G above.[20]

Similarly for porterage (Item B), there does not seem to have been any fixed rule as to how much may be demanded. People were pressed into service by the central as well as the local government as occasion arose, although it seems that the inhabitants of any village were not engaged to carry things for a long distance, but would be changed at the next village.[21]

As for free service for cutting fodders for government, the amount of the annual (*salabad*) obligation appears to have been fixed for each district and then for each village (probably from 10,000 to 50,000 bundles per year per village depending on the size of the village).[22]Villagers would probably spend about fifteen days every year for cutting some fixed amount of fodder[23] and they had to carry them to some nearby stable of the government.[24]

As regards miscellaneous jobs at the central and local government offices, as in Item D, no required amount of labour was fixed beforehand; duration of service varied from fifteen days[25] to two months[26] per annum in different regions.

The period of service in miscellaneous labour and saddlery at government stables as shown in Item E is only mentioned as

'per last year' (*salgujastapramanen*).[27] But, as we shall point out later, service of this nature was rendered by the same castes (*jati*) as that Item D referred to above, so that we may say that the duration of forced labour in Item E was also from fifteen days to two months per annum.

The amount of corvée in watchmanship at market places as referred to in Item F, is by no means clear.

At any rate it should be borne in mind that, excepting Item G concerned with *inam* villages, the duration of service whether eight days or fifteen days or two months as shown above was demanded or sanctioned by the central government. As a matter of fact, local authorities often exacted additional corvée, and people faced with the excessive demand would sometimes petition the central government to reduce or stop it or they would simply run away. What the central government would do on such occasions will be discussed later on.

Corvée and Caste System

Let us first begin with corvée in porterage (Item B) and fodder cutting (Item C). People who were engaged to do such jobs are simply called either 'forced labourers' (*begari*, *vethi*, *vethbegari*), 'men' (*asami*), or *rayat* (or *rayet*) in our records. As is known, the term *rayat* means 'people' or 'subjects' in general and 'peasants' in particular; at any rate, it is not the name of any specific caste. Accordingly, we may infer that the corvée in porterage and fodder cutting was imposed not on any specific castes but on villagers in general, most of whom were of course peasants.

On the other hand, it is not clear what kind of people were made to do the jobs of watchmen at market places (Item F).

The situation in regard to construction and repair work (Items A and G), various kinds of work at government offices (Item D) and miscellaneous jobs, particularly at saddlery and stables (Item E), is, however, significantly connected with the caste system. For these types of work certain specific castes are clearly pointed out in the records. For construction and repair

jobs of buildings and dams (Items A and G),[28] *sutars* (carpenters), *kumbhars* (makers of pots and bricks), *patharvats* (masons), and *gavandi* (bricklayers) were employed along with the forced labourers (*vethis*) and *rayat*, *mahars* (untouchable caste engaged in miscellaneous menial labour such as sweeping and removing carcasses of animals) for miscellaneous jobs (*rabanuk* or *rabate*) at government offices (Item D) and stables (Item E);[29] and *chanbhars* (untouchable caste occupied with leather works), *mangs* (untouchable caste of rope-makers), and *jingars* (untouchable caste specializing in making bridles and saddles among the leather works) for work at saddlery of government stables (Item E).[30] For such jobs not only the names of specific castes are mentioned but also the number of persons to be engaged from each district or village is often specified.

The fact that various artisan and untouchable castes were regularly pressed into forced service in their respective traditional occupations by the government or by the privileged holders of fiefs and or *inams* suggests that an important role was played by the caste system in the total polity of the Maratha kingdom: the caste system not only maintained self-sufficiency of services *inside* a village, but also was closely connected with and utilized by the authorities through the system of forced labour.[31]

III. CORVÉE AND FREEDOM OF PEOPLE

Basic Attitude of Government towards Corvée

The people who were made to yield free services had necessarily to be protected. And in fact the government seems to have always taken care to ensure that people were not 'harassed' (*upadrav*) or driven to 'abscond' (*paraganda*) due to excessive demand for revenue, corvée, or other burdens. However, the demand for corvée by local bureaucrats and their subordinates tended to be so heavy that people sometimes resorted to absconding. In such cases the central government would intervene and command the local bureaucrats to reduce the demand down to

the customary level and extract no more corvée than was required for the government work and that with a due consent of the hereditary officers of the place.[32] The government at the same time would also order the headman of the village to induce those who had absconded to come back to their village.[33] When people engaged as porters ran away, which happened sometimes, the government imposed a fine on their village and employed wage-labourers (*majurdar*) in their stead.[34] If people complained about excessive corvée, the government would accept the appeal and allow them to pay a certain amount of money in lieu of the corvée,[35] although a measure like this does not seem to have become perpetual.[36]

Not only did the government occasionally allow payment in lieu of corvée, sometimes it also specially reduced or cancelled the annual corvée of masons, bricklayers, and people of similar trade if they happened at the time to be employed in the construction of some donated temple, or if they happened to live in such villages as had recently been ravaged by an army or as had just entered the busy agricultural season.[38]

Moreover, not all the corvée was entirely unpaid: at least those who were requisitioned for miscellaneous jobs were sometimes paid a little money or given some grains.[38]

In short it seems that the *principle*, as it were, of the central government was not to exact as much corvée from the people as possible but to impose it upon them 'properly' (*shist*), namely 'according to the custom' (*shirastpramanen*) and to the extent that the central government demanded or sanctioned.[39]

Freedom of People

As pointed out above, when people ran away from their villages owing to some grievances, government tried to induce them to go back. Were the people *legally* bound to live in some fixed region or village? Or were they free to migrate to other places, even in opposition to the wish of the government?

To be sure I have not found any evidence to show that people actually migrated to other places merely because of the excessive

demand of corvée. There are, however, several interesting records which show that people did migrate *en masse* due to a difference of revenue burden among different regions. Of these the most informative document is translated below.

The secretariat (*chitnisi*) of Poona government issued the following order to a bureaucrat posted at Nasik District in December 1779.

Govind Ram, the governor (*mamledar*) of Kalyan Bhivandi District, reported early this year to the government as follows: 'Whereas in the regions of Deher Gorath and Korakda of Kalyan Bhivandi District, survey (*pahani*) was conducted in the suhur year 1172 (= AD 1771), and Trinbak Vinayak [name of an officer] settled the revenue (*jamabandi*), the peasants (*kulen*) surveyed have left for the regions of Trinbak and Ratangad [of Nasik District], so that the above two regions [of Kalyan Bhivandi] became ruined, and a loss of government took place.' The government have therefore already issued the following letter to you: 'Send back the above peasants to their respective regions, or collect the revenue (*dhara*) from these peasants in your own regions according to the rate that would be fixed by the governor of Kalyan.' Nevertheless, you did not do so, but simply issued a letter to your own collectors (*kamavisdars*) to the effect that peasants should be sent back if they agreed (*rajaband*) to do so. Therefore the officers, subordinate to the governor (*mamledar*) of the above District [Kalyan Bhivandi], have again petitioned to the government as follows: 'Why should the peasants agree to go back, since these peasants who had been cultivating their land here at the rate of Rs 50 are now cultivating the same area of land there at the rate of Rs 25? When these peasants newly migrated there [Trinbak and Ratangad] the collectors of the places promptly issued assurances knowing that they (collectors) would also be benefited. Why should the peasants therefore agree to go back? . . . Therefore please issue an order on this matter.' Accordingly this order-letter is issued to you. When someone goes there [Trinbak and Ratangad] to take back the peasants

to their respective regions—the peasants who have migrated from the two regions of the above District [Kalyan Bhivandi] to your regions—issue a strict order (*tākid*) to them for taking them (peasants) back. If the peasants do not want to go back, collect revenue (*vasul*) from everyone of them according to the assessment that will be fixed by the governor of Kalyan on the basis of the survey conducted in suhur year 1172. You must see to it that the complaint does not occur again on this matter.[40]

The document fairly clearly shows at least the following two points. First, people[41] could migrate to other areas if they wanted to do so, even against the will of government. In other words, they were not *de jure* bound to live in a fixed area or village, but had *in principle* the freedom to migrate, provided they paid their revenues and other dues to the authorities. Generally speaking, it appears that in this kingdom the *serfs* had no legal status. In principle people in general were free, excepting the slaves who had no freedom at all *de jure* or *de facto*.[42] Second, the above record shows, however, that both the central government and the local bureaucrats went all out to induce the people who had left their villages to go back there.

Why did not the government leave the people to migrate and satisfy itself with collecting revenues and other dues from them from their new place where they wanted to settle down? Why did the government so strongly want the absconders to go back to their villages?

There seem to have been two major reasons. The first lay in the systems of revenue collections. Broadly there were two systems of revenue collection: collection through formal collectors (*kamavisdars*) and collection through revenue farmers (*khots*). In the *khoti* system, when the farmers were unable to collect the contracted amount of revenue due to the absconding of peasants or some other reasons, they were obliged to 'fill up' (*bharnen*) the deficiency from their own resources unless they were specifically exempted from it by the government.[43] In the case of *kamavisdari*, although the collectors were not always

obliged to fill up the deficiency from their own pockets, they were usually obliged to pay the government in advance a considerable portion of the revenue before it was collected from their jurisdiction; also their remuneration often consisted of a certain proportion of the assessed revenue.[44] It was therefore very important for both collectors and revenue farmers that as many people as possible should remain and work in their areas which were sometimes contained in a single village. The second reason is to be found in the vested interests of the indigenous privileged class called *hakkdars*, such as *deshmukhs*, *deshpandes*, *patils* (hereditary headmen of villages), *kulkarnis* (hereditary accountants of villages) as well as temples, priests, and so on. All such people were entitled to receive a certain portion of produce from the people of the region or the village.[45] Therefore it seems to have been necessary for the government to maintain and promote the settlement of people in specific areas and villages in order to protect the vested interests of the privileged classes, even though, as mentioned before, the government at the same time did take into consideration the welfare of the people.

Thus it may be said that the *de jure* free status of ordinary people was more or less restricted *de facto* by the politico-economic interests of the ruling classes, extending from the village *hakkdars* up to the central government, and that they were actually bound to some extent to live in some specific region and village.

Mechanism for Enforcing the Corvée

In a government as well as in an alienated village it was usually the headman of the village (*patil*) who was held responsible at the bottom of the administrative hierarchy to maintain and promote the settlement of people and collect annual revenue, cesses and corvée from them.[46] Being a connecting link between the government authorities and the people, he would pass on their complaint to the authorities about excessive demand for revenue and corvée, with the request for their reduction or exemption,[47] and sometimes he himself would resort to absconding along

with the villagers.[48] On the other hand, however, it was he who would deal with the local authorities and undertake to procure necessary corvée for them,[49] and indeed there were some *patils* who managed to get their revenue-free land (*inam jamin*) expanded as a special reward for their distinguished service to the government by organizing the required corvée.[50] But unfortunately we are unable at present to make it clear how the village headman allotted the burden of corvée among his villagers.

IV. CONCLUSION

Although our discussion has been limited to the eighteenth century Maratha *svarajya*, the following points among others emerge: First, there was a strong financial connection between Maratha polity and caste system through the regular requisition of forced labour from artisan and menial castes. Second, the people had their *de jure* liberty of migration though this was in fact restricted by the government because of the specific revenue system on the one hand and the vested interests of the privileged class on the other. And third, the institution of village community was utilized by the ruling powers as the compulsory mechanism for procuring revenue, cesses and corvée.

When Maratha *svarajya* was annexed to British territories in 1817–18, the basic principle of the government of East India Company was to do everything possible 'to reassure people concerning the new government'.[51] With this end in view the corvée was abolished with regard to government work. In its stead was levied a small tax on every government village for fodders (*gavat begar*) and for miscellaneous labour (*rabanuk*).[52] However, corvée continued to be often requisitioned by low-class officers and soldiers of the government. This abuse had to be frequently prohibited.[53] On the other hand, the government connived at the exaction of forced labour by indigenous privileged classes such as *deshmukhs*, *deshpandes*, *inamdars*, and so on for a long time. It was in 1860 that the government formally prohibited all sorts of forced labour in British India. The Indian Penal Code enacted in the year declared, 'whoever unlawfully

compels any person to labour against the will of that person, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to one year, or with fine, or with both.'[54] Although forced labour seems to have been occasionally exacted for private ends even after the promulgation of the Code, the provision is no doubt one of the important aspects of transition from medieval to modern period in Indian History.

NOTES

1. D. D. Kosambi, *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History*, Bombay, 1956, chs. 9 & 10.
2. R. S. Sharma, *Indian Feudalism: c. 300–1200*, Calcutta, 1965, pp. 263–7. See also R. Coulborn, 'Feudalism, Brahminism, and the Intrusion of Islam upon Indian History', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. x, no. 3, April 1968, Mouton Publishers, pp. 356–74.
3. e.g. L. Gopal, *The Economic Life of Northern India*, Varanasi, 1965, pp. 26–8. S. A. Q. Husaini, *The Economic History of India*, vol. I, Calcutta, 1962, pp. 167–8. B. P. Mazumdar, *Socio-Economic History of Northern India (1030–1194 AD)*, Calcutta, 1960, pp. 188–90.
4. S. K. Maity, *The Economic Life of Northern India in Gupta Period (Cir. A.D. 300–550)*, Calcutta, 1957, pp. 152–4. U. N. Ghoshal, *Hindu Revenue System*, Calcutta, 1929, pp. 39, 40, etc.
5. D. D. Kosambi, op. cit., pp. 338ff.
6. J. Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, London, 1st ed., 1829–32, reprint 1950, vol. I, 'Sketch of a Feudal System in Rajasthan'.
7. e.g. J. N. Sarkar, *Mughal Administration*, 4th ed., Calcutta, 1952, p. 88. I. Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India*, Asia Publishing House, 1963, pp. 150, 167, 239. K. P. Mitra, 'Begar or Forced Labour in Historical Records', *Proceedings of Indian Historical Records Commission*, vol. XXIV, Jaipur, 1948, pp. 26–7.
8. Regional distribution of the records is as follows: eleven records for Poona, ten for Junnar, eight for Ahmadnagar, six for Konkan, five for Ratnagiri, three for Bessein, two each for Nasik and Satara, one each for Khandesh, Aurangabad, Sholapur and Dharwar.
9. G. C. Vad & D. B. Parasnis (ed.), *Selections from the Satara Raja's*

and the Peshwa's Diaries (abbreviated as SSRPD in the subsequent notes), vol. II, no. 328, Poona, 1906.

10. Ibid., vol. III, no. 341.
11. Ibid., vol. I, no. 281.
12. In Ahmadnagar Collectorate, for instance, there were 527 assigned villages out of 2647 at the commencement of British period. *Inam* villages numbered at 156.5. Thus assigned villages and *inam* ones occupied about 20% and 6% respectively of the total number of villages in the Collectorate. Vide W. Chaplin, *A Report Exhibiting a View of the Fiscal and Judicial System of Administration Introduced into the Conquered Territory above the Guts, under the Authority of the Commissioner in the Dekhan*, Bombay, 1824, reprint 1877, p. 17.
13. For *mokasa* villages see SSRPD, vol. II, no. 284; vol. III, no. 334; and for *inam* villages see ibid., vol. II, no. 285; vol. VIII, nos. 1090, 1091. S. L. Vaidya (ed.), *Vaidya Daftarantun Nivadlele Kagad* (abbreviated as *Vaidya Daftar* in the subsequent notes), vol. V (1752–53), no. 2, Poona, Shaka 1873.
14. S. N. Sen, *Administrative System of the Marathas*, Calcutta, 1923 (2nd ed. 1925), Book II, chs. V & VI. This book, however, does not refer to the forced labour.
15. SSRPD, vol. III, nos. 327, 334.
16. In this kingdom a part of the village lands was often given in *inam*, apart from *inam* villages. In my knowledge there is only one instance in Junnar region where the cultivation of such an *inam* land in a village was carried out by means of forced labour of the villager. In this case, though it is not clear who was the *inamdar*, villagers cultivated the *inam* land by corvée in addition to free contribution of 17,000 bundles of fodder to government, which admitting the excessive exaction of forced labour exempted them from the fodder-contribution for a year. See SSRPD, vol. II, no. 285.
17. Regarding the cultivation of state and *inam* lands by the tenants, see ch. 7 of this book.
18. SSRPD, vol. II, no. 286.
19. Government postponed or reduced the requisition of such forced labour during the busy farming season. SSRPD, vol. VIII, no. 1088.
20. *Vaidya Daftar*, op. cit., vol. IV, (1741) no. 17; (1745) no. 4.
21. SSRPD, vol. I, no. 365; vol. III, no. 412; vol. VIII, no. 1090.
22. SSRPD, vol. VII, no. 741. But the obligation of a certain village,

for example, was changed from 14,000 bundles in the year 1763 to 13,500 bundles ten years later. From which it may be inferred that the annual burden of each village may have varied according to the change in the size of its population, for instance. See SSRPD, vol. VIII, no. 1087.

23. Ibid., vol. II, no. 288.
24. Ibid., vol. VIII, no. 1089.
25. Ibid., vol. VI, no. 723.
26. Ibid., vol. III, no. 334.
27. Ibid., vol. III, no. 265; vol. VI, no. 673.
28. Ibid., vol. II, nos. 196, 286; vol. III, no. 315. *Vaidya Daftar*, vol. IV, (1741) no. 17, (1743) no. 17, (1745) no. 4. R. V. Oturkar (ed.), *Peshvekalin Samajik va Arthik Patravyavahar*, Poona, 1950, no. 89.
29. SSRPD, vol. II, no. 283; vol. III, nos. 265, 334, 415; vol. VI, nos. 673, 723.
30. Ibid., vol. III, no. 265; vol. VI, no. 673.
31. cf. ch. 4 of this book.
32. '...veth bigar sarkarkamas agatyagatya lagel, ti jamindarache gujaratinen shist karun ghenen' (SSRPD, vol. VI, no. 716). Also ibid., vol. VI, no. 723.
33. Ibid., vol. VI, no. 735; vol. VII, nos. 429, 431.
34. Ibid., vol. VIII, no. 1092.
35. Ibid., vol. II, no. 283; vol. VII, no. 741; vol. VIII, no. 1089.
36. Ibid., vol. II, no. 283; vol. III, no. 415.
37. Ibid., vol. II, no. 196; vol. VIII, nos. 999, 1087, 1088.
38. Ibid., vol. II, no. 282; vol. VI, no. 723.
39. Ibid., vol. III, no. 421. Oturkar, *Peshvekalin Samajik va Arthik Patravyavahar*, op. cit., nos. 6, 88.
40. Ibid., vol. VI, no. 744. 'Pargane Deher Gorath va Taluke Korakda, Prant Kalyan Bhivandi, yethil san isnain sabainant pahani houn, Trinbak Vinayak yannin jamabandi tharauli, tya pahanintil kulen, Trinbak va Ratangad Talukyant gelin ahet, yajmulen he donhi mahal kharab padon sarkar nuksan jalen, hen vartman salmajkulin Govind Ram Mamledar, Prant majkur, yannin sarkarant nivedan kelen, tyajvarun tuhmans patren sadar jalin kin, sadarhu kulen mahalche mahalin pathavnen, nahin tar tya kulancha dhara Kalyanche Mamledar bandhun detil, tyapramanen tuhmin aple Talukiyakade jama dharnen, asen astan tyapramanen na kelen; ani tuhmin aple kadil kamavisdarans patren kulen rajaband karun

netil tin neun denen, yapramanen patren dilhin, tyas kulache rajabandicha prakar tari, jen kul prant majkurin pannas rupayanche jitki jamin karit hoten ten kul tikde jaun titki jamin panchvis rupayant kariten. ukten kul tikde naven jaten ten tikdil kamavis-daras naphyant milten, hen janon sahal kaul detat, tevhan kul raji houn kasen yeil? donhi Taluke sarkarche; yajkaritan yevishin adnya jali pahije; hmanon Prant majkurche Mamledarakadil karkunannin Hujur vinanti keli, tyajvarun hen patra sadar kelen ase, tari Prant majkurche donhi mahalantil kul tuhmankadil hardu talukiyant getin ahet, tin mahalche mahalin anitil, tyans takid karun laun denen. kulen yet naslin tari, isannent pahani jali ahe, tyapramanen Kalyanche Mamledar tya kulachi jama bandhun detil, tya bamojib kularagavar jama dharun, vasul ghenen. [ye] vishincha bobhat phiron yeun na denen.'

41. The record translated above refers to peasants (*kulen*), but other records of similar purport are concerned with people in general (*rayat*), so that the above record may be taken to apply to people in general. Vide ibid., vol. III, nos. 372, 375.
42. On the position of male and female slaves in this kingdom, who were employed mostly in domestic services in the courts and more or less well-to-do families, see ch. 5 of this book.
43. SSRPD, vol. VI, nos. 716, 762.
44. Although a large number of records regarding the *kothi* and *kamavisdari* systems are available, it is enough to refer to SSRPD, vol. III, nos. 406, 407, 427, 430; and also to S. N. Sen, *Administrative System of the Marathas*, op. cit., 1st ed., pp. 219–21.
45. Although records on these privilege-holders are also large in number, we need refer to only several here; S. N. Sen, op. cit., pp. 183–95, 211–18; S. N. Joshi, 'Deshmukhi Watan', *Aitihasik Sankirna Nibandh*, vol. I, Poona, 1943, pp. 60–75; S. N. Joshi, 'Chaugula', *Aitihasik Sankirna Nibandh*, vol. II, Poona, 1947, pp. 28–33.
46. *Deshmukh* and *deshpande*, hereditary chief and accountant of a *pargana* respectively, were there to help as well as check the local bureaucrats; they were not *directly* responsible for collecting revenue, etc. and requisitioning corvée in the eighteenth century Maratha *svarajya*. See S. N. Sen, op. cit., pp. 211–17; SSRPD, vol. VI, nos. 716, 723.
47. Ibid., vol. III, no. 334; vol. VI, no. 714.
48. Ibid., vol. III, no. 372.

49. Ibid., vol. I, no. 366; vol. VI, no. 741.
50. Ibid., vol. I, no. 366; vol. VI, no. 741.
51. K. Ballhatchet, *Social Policy and Social Change in Western India, 1817–1830*, London, 1957, p. 10.
52. W. Chaplin, *A Report Exhibiting a View of the Fiscal and Judicial System of Administration* etc., op. cit., pp. 139, 143.
53. R. D. Choksey (ed.), *Period of Transition (1818–1826)*, Poona, 1945, pp. 101, 102, 200–7.
54. H. S. Gour, *The Penal Law of India*, Calcutta, 1910, vol. II, Section 374, pp. 1453–4.

CHAPTER 7: THE LAND-SYSTEM AND THE PEASANTRY*

I. INTRODUCTION

1. *Modern Theories on Land-Systems in Medieval Deccan*

There are three theories regarding the land-systems in the medieval Deccan from the early fourteenth to the early nineteenth century. The first theory was propounded by B. H. Baden-Powell; it regards the ordinary agricultural lands (as distinct from *inam* lands) as practically owned by the State. In his work, *The Indian Village Community* (1896), Baden-Powell refers to the land-systems of the medieval Deccan and states, 'The land-holder had theoretically no ownership-rights at all. . . . In the Dekkan and in the South, the raiyat was not allowed to sell his lands;...Ownership was only acknowledged in land granted revenue-free by the State, and apparently in lands held on the privileged tenure of *watan* (land held in virtue of office in a village or district'.[1] Indeed, he calls 'the raiyat-wari villagers' 'Crown tenants'.[2] Against this theory of State owner-

*I wish to take this opportunity to express my specific gratitude to my Indian *guru*, Shri G. H. Khare of Bharat Itihas Sanshodhak Mandal of Poona, and to my Japanese teacher, Professor Y. Muramatsu of Hitotsubashi University, both of whom have continuously guided and encouraged my work. Further, I am grateful to Monday Research Seminar on Asia and Saturday Research Seminar on History at Hitotsubashi University as well as the Society for the Study of Indian History in Japan for their valuable suggestions and advice.

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ship of ordinary agricultural lands apart from the 'land granted revenue-free by the State' (*inam* land) and the 'lands held on the privileged tenure of *watan*' (he calls this 'watan' lands),[3] Professor A. S. Altekar emphasizes a theory of peasant ownership of all agricultural lands. He says in his *A History of Village Communities in Western India* (1927) that there was neither any idea of communal ownership nor that of the crown being the owner of the land in the Deccan,[4] and he concludes, 'the ownership of lands occupied by our village communities in Western India was vested in the peasant proprietors'.[5] According to him, even 'the Inamdars have got the right to receive merely the revenue; usually they have no proprietary rights in the soil'.[6]

In between the two opposing ideas expressed in these two theories, Professor S. N. Sen has expounded a new theory. In Chapter Two of Part II of his *Administrative System of the Marathas* (1923), while discussing the 'Village Communities' of the eighteenth century Deccan, he says that, excepting *inam* lands held by hereditary officers and servants of the village, 'the village land was divided among the Mirasdars and Uparis. The Mirasdars were residents of the village who had permanent proprietary right in their land, and could not be ejected or dispossessed so long as they paid their rent.... The property of Mirasdars was hereditary and saleable, and even when ejected for non-payment of land tax, the Mirasdars did not lose the right of recovering their ancestral farm land for a long period.... The Uparis, on the other hand, were tenants-at-will, and generally strangers holding Government land under the management of Mamlatdars.'[7] In other words, he distinguishes three kinds of lands (viz. *inam* lands, *miras* lands and Government lands) and two classes of peasants (viz. *mirasdars* and *uparis*).

Of the three scholars, each representing a modern theory, Baden-Powell was, as is well known, a specialist in the land-systems of northern India in the late nineteenth century, and was neither an expert on medieval India nor an original enquirer into the land-systems of the Deccan.[8] Some mistakes may therefore be found in his statements on the land-systems of the Deccan. For example, in the medieval Deccan, the lands held

on the privileged tenure attached to the *watan* of the hereditary officers of the village and the district were as a rule called not *watan* but *inam* lands. On the other hand, Professor Altekar was a specialist in ancient India, so his statements on medieval Deccan are often founded on the ancient Indian evidences. In contrast with these scholars, Professor Sen was in his youth a specialist in Maratha history and has written (or translated) several books on the subject, the chief among which is *Administrative System of the Marathas* referred to above. Therefore, his statement on the land-systems of the medieval Deccan seems to be the most reliable of the three theories.

But there may be some doubts about certain points even in his statement. For instance, what does he exactly mean when he says that the *uparis held* Government land? Also it is not quite clear whether there were no other lands but *inam*, *miras*, and Government.

2. *Reports of the Early British Administrators*

We have at least three reports on the fiscal, judicial and land-systems of the Deccan written by British administrators not long after the British conquest of the Maratha kingdom in 1818. These are: (1) M. Elphinstone, *Report on the Territories Conquered from the Paishwa*, submitted to the Supreme Government of British India, 1st ed., 1819; 2nd ed., 1820; 3rd ed., 1838, Bombay, pp. 112 + lxx. (2) W. Chaplin, *A Report exhibiting a View of the Fiscal and Judicial System of Administration introduced into the Conquered Territory above the Guts, under the Authority of the Commissioner in the Dekhan*, 1824, reprinted in 1877, Bombay, pp. 189. (3) W. H. Sykes, *Report of the Land Tenures of the Dekkan*, 1830, printed by the order of the House of Commons in 1866 as East India (Dekkan), pp. 32.

Of these reports, Elphinstone's is the best known. Professor Sen depends on it whenever indigenous evidences are not available; Professor Altekar also occasionally refers to it. However, neither of them seems to have seen the other two reports. Baden-Powell mentioned that he saw a note on the

Deccan villages by W. H. Sykes, but he was unable to refer to any of the three reports.[9]

Since these reports were written for administrative purposes of the East India Company, their contents were limited in several respects. For example, while much attention is paid to the organization for revenue collection and to the rights in such lands as brought revenue to the government, little attention is given to the lands that brought no or little revenue to the government (namely *inam* lands).[10] Also there is no mention of the state of the actual cultivators. Despite such limitations, these reports are important for the study of the administrative, judicial and economic institutions of the Deccan. They explain what the British administrators found there immediately after the conquest. Elphinstone's and Sykes' reports are specially significant for studying the medieval Deccan, for they treat mainly the institutions of the pre-British period rather than those of the British period.

There is a remarkable difference of opinion between Elphinstone and Sykes regarding the land-systems of the pre-British and immediate post-British Deccan.

Elphinstone, after explaining the functions and remunerations of the hereditary officers of a village,[11] states

> With the few exceptions already mentioned (viz. village officers), all the villagers are cultivators, and these, as there are few labourers, are distinguished by their tenures into two classes, that of Meerassees or landed proprietors, and that of Ooprees, or farmers.
>
> ...The result of these reports (of Collectors) and of my own enquiries is, that a large portion of the ryots are the proprietors of their estates, subject to the payment of a fixed land-tax to Government; that their property is hereditary and saleable, and they are never dispossessed, while they pay their tax, and even then they have for a long period (at least 30 years—Elphinstone) the right of reclaiming their estate, on paying the dues of Government. Their land tax is fixed, but the late Marratta Government loaded it with other im-

positions, which reduced that advantage to a mere name; so far however was this from destroying the value of their estates, that, although the Government took advantage of their attachment to make them pay considerably more than an Oopree, and though all the Merassdars were in ordinary cases obliged to make up for failures in the payment of each of their body, yet their lands were saleable and generally at 10 years' purchase. This fact might lead us to suppose, that even with all the exactions of the late Marratta Government the share of the ryot must have amounted to more than half the produce of the land; but experience shows that men will keep their estates, even after becoming a losing concern, until they are obliged to part with them from absolute want, or until oppression has lasted so long, that the advantages of proprietorship, in better times, have been forgotten. The Meerassdars are perhaps more numerous than the Ooprees all over the Marratta country. In the Carnatic, I am informed by Mr Chaplin, that they do not exist at all. Besides Meerassadar, they are called Thulkuree about Poona.

An opinion prevails throughout the Marratta country, that under the old Hindoo government all the land was held by Meerassees, and that Ooprees were introduced as the old proprietors sunk under the tyranny of the Mohammedans. This opinion is supported by the fact, that the greater part of the fields, now cultivated by Ooprees, are recorded in the village books as belonging to absent proprietors; and affords, when combined with circumstances observed in other parts of the Peninsula, and with the light land-tax authorized by Menu, a strong presumption, that the Revenue system under the Hindoos . . . was founded on private property in the soil.

All the land which does not belong to the Meerassees belongs to Government, or those to whom Government has assigned it. The property of the zemindars in the soil has not been introduced, or even heard of, in the Marratta country.

The cultivated land belonging to Government, except some parts which it keeps in its own hands to be managed by the Mumlutdars, was always let out to Ooprees, who had a lease,

with the expiration of which their claim and duties expired.

These are all the tenures on which land was held as far as regards the property of the soil. The assignments by government of its own revenue or share of the produce will be mentioned hereafter. It need only be observed, that in making these grants it could not transfer the share of a Meerassdar. Even Bajee Row [the last Peshwa] when he had occasion for Meerassee land, paid the price of it.[12] (Brackets mine.)

In this quotation, two points should be particularly noted. First, there were two classes of peasants: landed proprietors called *mirasis*, *mirasdars*, or *thalkaris*; and farmers or tenants called *upairs*. Second, there were three kinds of agricultural lands: *misras* lands owned by *mirasdars*, 'government lands' or lands belonging to the government, and lands assigned or granted by the government. There is no doubt that the 'lands assigned by Government' mean the revenue-free *inam* lands held by the hereditary officers of village and district as well as by the temples, priests and other various persons.[13]

When we keep in mind Elphinstone's theory that there were three kinds of agricultural lands, however, we find one point in his report which is not quite clear. He says elsewhere in the report without explanation, 'Every village has a portion of ground attached to it, which is committed to the management of the inhabitants': thus he suggests the holding of lands by the village as a group.[14] He also writes in connection with village expenses that when the expense was beyond the means of a village to defray at once,

> the Village contracted a public debt, which was gradually paid by an annual assessment included in the *saudir warrid puttee* (extra assessment on the villagers), and sometimes provided for by mortgages or *grants of land on the part of the villagers*. These grants were called *gaum nisbut enaums* (*ganva nisbat inams; inams* in charge of the village); if they were so small as to be admitted, or be likely to be admitted by the Government, no rent was charged on them; but if they were

too large to be agreed to or to escape observation, the revenue was paid by all the other ryots, the creditor still enjoying them rent free: small grants were also made for temples, or to Brahmins, which were always acquiesced in by the Government; but *the villagers have never pretended to any property in the soil beyond the estates of the Meerassdars.*[15] (Italics and matter within parenthesis added by the present author.)

Here, too, he states to the effect that villagers as a group granted the lands of their village on the one hand, and that they 'never pretended to any property in the soil beyond the estates of the Meerassdars'. This statement seems to be a sort of contradiction.

The characteristic feature of Sykes' theory lies in his emphasis on the holding of lands by the village and in his apparent objection to the theory of land-holding by the government or state. To be sure, he also recognizes the existence of two classes of peasants: the proprietors of land called *mirasi* or *mirasdar* in Arabic, or *thalkari* or *thlwahi* in indigenous terms; and the tenants called *upari*,[16] an indigenous term meaning 'strangers'. According to Elphinstone, the lands which were recorded in the village books as belonging to absent proprietors (called *gatkul jamin* in Marathi and further discussed later) reverted to the government and were let out to *uparis* as mentioned in the passage quoted above, whereas Sykes points out first that a greater part of the agricultural lands of the villages enquired into by him were *gatkul jamin* (lands of extinct families), and that even such a land had usually a specific name, which was probably the surname of its original owner (this point will be discussed in this article later with examples).[17] Sykes continues:

Even the hereditary lands of extinct families became the property of the Pateel [headman of the village], together with all waste lands, excepting in some villages where such lands were appropriated by the village corporation; *the Government distinctly sanctioning the exercise of such powers, whether by the Pateel or the village authorities.*[18] (Italics in the original; matter within brackets the present author's.)

He next criticizes the theory of State ownership of lands:

> The assumption that the lordship of the soil is in the Government has occasioned the monstrous injustice of the dispossession of all the landholders of the Dekkan of their franchise. Happily, from the paternal character of the Government, it has had few practical consequences, beyond the abrogation of the rights of the Pateel, and his degradation to the level of other cultivators. It has dispossessed also the village authorities, and the Pateel, of the power of appropriating or selling the lands of extinct families, together with waste lands, similar to the common lands of an English village, the right to which is so tenaciously held by our peasantry; from our ignorance, also, of the details of the tenures and duties of the several hereditary officers, it has occasioned some untoward modifications of the relations of these parties to each other, and to the Government.[19]

As evidences of his theory of communal appropriation and disposition of waste lands as well as lands of extinct families Sykes has translated and included in his report two Marathi documents, the first of these indicates that *patils* appropriated the lands of an extinct family; it also reveals that they disposed of the house-site of an extinct family in their village. The second document shows that the village assembly sold the waste lands of the village. These documents will be referred to again later in this article.

When we bear in mind his theory of communal ownership of waste lands and lands of extinct families and his criticism of the theory of State ownership of lands, a point in the report seems rather contradictory to this theory. Referring to the *jagir*, *inam*, *saranjam*, and so on, he says in chapter vi of his report: 'Jagir, which is a Persian word in its origin, is applied to *lands given* by *Government* for personal support, or as a fief for the maintenance of troops for the service for the State.' (Italics are mine.)[20] Here he suggests State ownership of lands or at least State disposition of lands, but he does not explain who gave *inam* lands.

In short, these reports by the British administrators agree on two points: (1) there were two classes of peasants; (2) *miras* lands

were owned by individual *mirasdars* and the ordinary land tax was levied on such lands. But the reports differ on the question of rights in the lands of extinct families and the waste lands. They do not clarify what kind of tenure was held in (revenue free) *inam* lands. Besides, it is not clear from these reports whether there were at all any lands distinctly designated in indigenous terms as 'state lands' or 'government lands'.

3. *Problems of this Article*

In this article I will discuss the following questions. First, what kinds of agricultural lands existed in the eighteenth century Deccan, and what kind of right was recognized in each kind? Second, which class of peasants, *mirasdars* or *uparis*, actually cultivated these lands of different kinds, and on what conditions?

An examination of these questions is very important for understanding the economic history of the medieval Deccan as well as for understanding the social and economic changes that occurred during the British period.

4. *Source Materials*

A few words must be mentioned regarding the source materials upon which this article is based—some ninety records of the eighteenth century in Marathi collected mostly from the following source-books.

(1) G. C. Vad (prep.), *Selections from the Satara Raja's and the Peshwa's Diaries*, nine volumes, Poona, 1906–11, edited by the Orders of the Deccan Vernacular Translation Society, Poona, and published by the Society with the permission of the Government of Bombay. (These volumes will be referred to in the text as *Diaries* and as *SSRPD* in the footnotes of this article.)[21]

(2) R. V. Oturkar (ed.), *Peshvekalin Samajik va Arthik Patravyavahar*, Poona, 1950. (Referred to in footnotes as *Oturkar*).[22]

(3) Bharat Itihas Sanshodhak Mandal (ed.), *Aitihasik Sankirna Sahitya*, ten volumes, Poona, 1932–57 (abbreviated as *ASS* in footnotes).[23]

Besides the above source-books, two records in Marathi translated into English and included in the Sykes' report will also be used.

II. AGRICULTURAL LANDS

In the medieval Deccan the terms used for 'village' are *ganva* (a corrupt form of Sanskrit *grama*), *mauje* (a corrupt form of Arabic *mauza*), or the Persian *deh*. While these three terms were used interchangeably, formally *mauje* was prefixed to the proper name of a village. A bigger village that included a market place (*bajar*) was called *kasbe* (town ← Arabic *qasbah*).

It appears that the village in the eighteenth century Deccan as a rule took the collective form of inhabitation. The 'inhabited area' was called *pandhari*, and the 'cultivated area' *kali*.[24] These two are indigenous terms: the former originally meant 'white' and the latter 'black'. It is said that the people originally inhabited the white soil unfit for cultivation, and turned the black soil, found widely in the Deccan, into their agricultural fields.[25] At any rate, the 'inhabited area' was divided into house-sites (*gharthana* or *gharthikana*), each of which was owned by *patil* (village-headman) families and other village-officers, peasants, and village-servants. Each family built a house (*ghar* or *vada*) on its allotted site. When a family left or had gone out of the village or passed away it was called *gatkul* (a corrupt compound of Sanskrit *gata* = gone or passed away; and *kula* = lineage or family), and the house-site and house left behind were called, respectively, *gatkul gharthana* and *gatkul vada*.

On the other hand, 'cultivated area' (*kali*) was divided into perhaps twenty to forty blocks called *thal* (←Sanskrit *sthala* = land), and each *thal* often had a name that was perhaps so called after the surname of the original proprietor. This point will be discussed later. Now, each block was composed of fields variously called *shet* or *set* (←Sanskrit *kshetra* = field), or *jamin* (←Persian *zamin* = land). Occasionally Sanskrit *bhumi* (land) was also used to mean such fields.

Around the 'cultivated area', there was usually a meadow

(*kuran* or *gayeran*). The meadow, meant for common use of the villagers, was called 'people's meadow' (*lokacha kuran*), and a separate meadow from which came the fodder and wood used by the government, was called 'government's meadow' (*sarkarcha kuran*).[26] Villagers had to supply free labour (*veth begar*) for cutting fodder and wood from the government's meadow and for carrying them to a local office.[27] But we are not concerned here with meadows.

Even in the territories directly administered by the King or his hereditary Peshwa (prime minister), namely in the territories called *svarajya*, there were scattered fiefs (*jagir*, *saranjam*, or *mokasa*) temporarily assigned to the bureaucrats. But this fief-system is a separate topic and will not be discussed in this article.

The subject of our discussion in this section is limited to the 'cultivated area' in the village. From our source materials we find that the 'cultivated area' of a village was divided as under:

(1) *Miras* lands (*miras jamin* or *miras set*).
(2) *Inam* lands (*inam jamin* or *inam set*).
(3) State lands variously called 'demesne of the Government' (*sarkarchi sheri*), 'demesne fields' (*sherichen shet*), 'demesne' (*sheri*), or 'treasury lands' (*khalisa jamin*).
(4) lands of extinct families (*gatkul jamin*) or waste lands (*pad jamin*).

We shall now enquire into the rights in these lands.

1. Miras Lands

Miras is an Arabic word which originally meant 'patrimony' or 'hereditary property'.

We will now examine an important record on the *miras* tenure. In *Diaries* dated 6 February 1772 it is recorded that the secretariat (*chitnisi*) of the Peshwa's government gave the following document (*patra*) to a man named V. K. Durve, 'now residing' (*hallin vasti*) in Village Kothale, Tarf Karepathar, Pargane Supe:

> You came to the *Hujur* (Peshwa) at the camp of Poona and petitioned, 'Malji bin Jebaji Nhalave, peasant *thalkari mirasdar*

(*kunbi thalkari mirasdar*) of Village Dhalevadi, Tarf Karepathar, Prant Poona, has 3 *rukes* of land (about 9 hectares) in the block named Tanapuri (*Tanapuryache thal*) of the above village. On 7 *bighas* (about 2.1 hectares) of the land, he dug wells and turned it into an orchard (*mala*). Above Malji, however, incurred very heavy debts and being quite unable to repay them he took from me Rs 250 and of his own free will (*atmasantoshe*) gave me, by defining four corners, 7 *bighas* of the land out of the Tanapuri block along with the wells and trees upon it for my hereditary enjoyment (*vanshparanparenen anabhavavyas*). It was agreed that I should pay the revenue of the government (*divan denen*) as it had been paid since long time, and (he) wrote and gave me (a sales-deed) attested by the witnesses (*sakshi*) of the *patil* and *kulkarni* (village accountant) of the above village as well as the *vatandars* (hereditary office-holders) of the neighbouring villages. In accordance with this I have been enjoying the property. The lord (*svami*) will please therefore take the sales-deed (*kharidkhat*) into consideration and grant me the favour of making and giving a document of the government for enjoyment (of the lands).' In requesting like this, (you) brought and showed an authentic sales-deed (*bajinas kharidkhat*). Taking all this into consideration (it is evident that) Malji bin Jebaji Nhalava, *kunbi thalkari mirasdar* of the above village, on his own free will gave you 7 *bighas* of land as *vatani miras* with the wells and trees on it out of 3 *rukas* of the Tanapuri block. The government therefore have agreed (*karar*) (with the deed), and have made and given this document for (your) enjoyment. Then, you (enjoy) the land of 7 *bighas* out of the Tanapuri block along with the wells and trees on it, dig more wells, pay the revenue to the government (*divan mahasul*), cultivate the orchard and make it prosperous, enjoy (it) by heredity unto (your) sons and grandsons, and live happily.'[28] [The following is added in a separate line]: On this matter a similar document has been sent to *deshmukh* (hereditary chief of a district) and *deshpande* (hereditary accountant of a district) of Prant Poona.

Thalkari is an indigenous term, *mirasdar* is a Muslim word, and both mean a land-owning peasant, as was shown in the reports of the British administrators (see section 1-2 of this article). *Vatani* is an adjective of *vatan* (patrimony) which is often used in our documents as a synonym of *miras*.[29] *Vatani* as used here is an adjective which means the same as *miras* and emphasizes it.

This document reveals six important points regarding *miras* tenure. First, a *mirasdar* could sell his land or a part of it as the need arose. Second, the purchaser could be a resident of some other village. In that case, the purchaser might continue to live in his own village and pay frequent visits to the bought land for cultivation (so-called *pai kashta*), or some members of his family might move out to and live in the village where the land was bought. Third, selling and buying of *miras* lands required to be attested by the village officers and neighbours. But this attestation was not a 'permission', rather a 'recognition' by the local people. Fourth, for selling and buying of *miras* lands it was not necessary to get any permission or recognition of the government beforehand. This means that the government did not have anything like the proprietary rights in the *miras* lands. Even then, fifth, the purchaser was obliged to pay to the government the revenue assessed on the bought *miras* lands. And sixth, the purchaser, provided he paid the revenue, was assured and protected by the government to enjoy the bought land. On granting a document of recognition and assurance, however, the government exacted a fee from the grantee which was usually equivalent to one-fourth of the purchase price.[30]

In short, it may be said that the *mirasdar* held fairly complete private proprietary rights in his *miras* lands. Nobody, not even the government, could arbitrarily infringe upon the *miras* right. For example, when the *miras* right was infringed upon by a headman and other people of the village, and the *mirasdar* appealed about it to the government, the government asked the bureaucrats of the locality to put a stop to the infringement.[31] Further, when the population of another village increased so much that it caused shortage of house-sites, the government

commanded the bureaucrats, the *deshmukh* and *deshpande* of the district and the *patil* of the village to convert 'the lands of *mirasdars*', situated near the 'inhabited area', into house-sites on the one hand, and to 'give them (*mirasdars*) the lands of extinct families (*gatkul set*) (of the village) in lieu of the (converted) lands' on the other.[32]

We will discuss in sub-section 4 of this section the lands of extinct families in general and the new creation of *miras* lands.

2. *Inam Lands*

The original meaning of *inam*, an Arabic word, was 'gift' or 'present'.

Inam in its widest sense in the Deccan terminology included three kinds of privileges. (1) The '*inam* village', all or most of the revenues from which were held hereditarily by particular persons or institutions. (2) Mere '*inam*', which was a hereditary grant to particular persons of a fixed amount or quantity out of the revenue from a certain village. And (3) '*inam* lands'.

According to an enquiry of the Bombay Inam Commission into the *inams* of the Deccan carried out from 1843 to 1863, the income from *inams* of all kinds in the regions, the area of which was nearly equal to the former *svarajya* of the Maratha kingdom, amounted to sixteen per cent of the land revenue of the same regions, about half of which was held by the hereditary officers of the villages and districts.[33] Although land revenue may have increased considerably since the British conquest due to increase in population and in the cultivation of waste lands, new *inams* were not created as a matter of principle, so the proportion of *inam* income to the total land revenue in the eighteenth century Deccan must have been much more than sixteen per cent. At any rate we may safely say that *inams* of all kinds altogether were quite large during the period under consideration.

Of the three kinds of *inams*, we shall discuss only the tenure in *inam* lands.

The tenure in *inam* lands was a privileged one as such lands were either entirely free from tax or occasionally a light *inam*-tax

(*inam patti*) at a rate much lower than that imposed on *miras* lands would be levied.

Various people and institutions, including *deshmukh*, *deshpande*, *patil*,[34] *kulkarni*, *chaugula* (assistant of the *patil*),[35] village-watchmen,[36] village-astrologer (*joshi*),[37] temples,[38] priests,[39] distinguished servants of the government,[40] held *inam* lands of different sizes. Such examples found in our sources are too many to enumerate.

There is no doubt that the holder of *inam* lands, viz. the *inamdar*, was entitled to enjoy them 'hereditarily unto the sons and grandsons' (*putrapautradi vanshparanparenen*).[41] Nor is there any doubt that at least such *inam* lands as were attached to a hereditary office (*vatan*) could be sold or disposed of by the holder along with the office. Documents which show this are also too numerous to quote from them all. Only one instance is shown as follows:

> When the *kulkarni*-cum-*jotish* of a village in Junnar region, a Brahmin by caste, died in 1740, he left behind neither any sons nor any male relatives (*vansh*) to succeed to the two hereditary offices (*vatan*). So, his widow divided the two offices into two equal shares, offered (*dan*) half of the share of the *kulkarni* as also of the *jotish vatans* to his son-in-law (daughter's husband, *javai*), and sold (*vikat*) the other halves to a Brahmin, perhaps of the same village, at the price of Rs 2,000. The seller gave a sales-deed (*kharedikhat*) to the buyer; the local assembly (*gota*) also gave a letter of attestation (*mahajar*) to the buyer, and the government, on receipt of a request from the buyer, took the two documents submitted by him into account, and granted him an official document called *vatan-patra*, and collected from him a fee of Rs 500. This *vatan-patra*, which confirms hereditary offices, shows that there were thirteen items of privileges (*man*) attached to the *kulkarnishipp* and three items of rights (*hakk*) attached to the *jotishship*, and that one of the three rights of *jotishship* was '*inam* lands of 25 *bighas* (about 8 hectares) (which would produce the net income?) of 12.5 *man* (probably about 157 kilograms) of grains'.[42]

In short, it is evident that *inam* lands attached to a hereditary office could be sold or transferred along with the office by the holder as the need arose. It is, however, not yet clear if such *inam* lands could be separated from the office to which they were attached and be sold or transferred separately.

It is also not clear whether *inam* lands that were not attached to any hereditary offices (e.g. *inam* lands held by temples, tombs, monasteries, distinguished servants of the government, and so on)[43] could be disposed of by their holders without any restrictions.

How *inam* lands were created will be shown in sub-sections 3 and 4 of this section.

3. State Lands

As pointed out before, what are here collectively called 'state lands' are those designated in the sources variously as *sarkarchi sheri* (demesne of government), *sheriche shet* (demesne lands), *sheri* (demesne), or *khalisa jamin* (treasury lands or Crown lands). Of these terms, *sheri* and *shet* (or *set*) are indigenous[44] while the others are Muslim words.

At any rate, there may have been a distinction between the lands owned or managed by the government as a corporation and those owned personally by the King or the Peshwa himself among the lands so variously designated as shown above. Since we cannot yet confirm such distinctions, all such lands will provisionally be treated as 'State lands'.

Although it is not clear if there were lands defined and demarcated as 'State lands' in each and every village, it is evident that in many villages, scattered over the Deccan, there were lands designated as 'State lands'. It is also evident that such lands were managed by local bureaucrats and could be disposed of by them on receipt of an order from the central government.

Two examples of this follow.

On 1 July 1717, the first Peshwa, Balaji Vishvanath, sent the following letter to the governor (*sarsubhedar*) and the clerks (*karkun*) of District Poona:

(Greetings, name and title of the addressees, name and title of

the sender, and the year) Rajshi—Swami (King Shahu) has favoured Mr Lakhmoji bin Godaji Garuda and granted upon him State waste lands (*khalisa pad jamin*) of 2 *chavars* (two hundred and forty *bighas*) of the first, second and third classes (*avaldumsim tin pratichi*) as follows:

1 *chavar* in Village Belsar of Region Sasvad.

0.5 *chavar* in Village Najhare of Region Karepathar.

0.5 *chavar* in Village Dhalevadi of Region Karepathar of the above District.

Total 2 *chavars* of waste lands have been granted in *inam* hereditarily unto the sons and grandsons. The royal document (*hujratchi sanad*) has been sent separately (to the grantee). Then, you, specify (*nemun*) the lands of 2 *chavars* in the above villages for him and let them go on as *inam*. (date). In the blocks (*thal*) of the above villages there are lands of extinct families (*gatkul set*) where no peasants (*kunbi*) are present. Specify and give these lands (concluding remarks).[45]

The grantee of the *inam* lands, Garuda, was the headman of Village Belsar[46] that appears in the above letter. Further, since the beginning of the seventeenth century, it was a custom widely prevalent in the Deccan and perhaps introduced by the Mughals to classify the agricultural lands into three classes according to the quality of soil, but we will not enter into the details of the custom here.

Another example of the State lands may be found in *Diaries* of the year 1783. It is written in the *Diaries* that the Peshwa's government dispatched the following order (*sanad*) to a local bureaucrat of Region Karyat-Maval:

As the villagers (*gonvakari*) residing in Village Gorhe-Budrukh (of the above Region) increased in number, the government is requested to allow 3 *bighas* of land (about 0.9 hectares) out of the government demesne (*sarkarchi sheri*) in the above village to be used as inhabited sites (*vasahati*), by levying rent (*sarkardast*) from the villagers', the headman (*patil*) . . . [name] . . . of the above village has thus petitioned

to the government (*Hujur*). Then, it is agreed that 3 *bighas* of land out of the government demesne in the above village be allowed to be used as inhabited sites of the villagers and the rent (*sarkardast*) of Rs 4.5 be collected from the villagers at the rate of Rs 1.5 per *bigha*. Accordingly, make an enquiry, specify the above mentioned 3 *bighas* of land and give them for inhabited sites. And collect Rs 4.5 from villagers per year.[47]

In short, it is evident that there were lands, designated as 'State lands', in many villages and these were managed by the local bureaucrats of the government. It should not be imagined, however, that all State lands were granted in *inam* or allowed as house-sites as shown above. Many of the State lands appear to have been cultivated in such a manner as we shall discuss in the next section.

4. *Lands of Extinct Families or Waste Lands*

Whereas the rights in *miras* lands, *inam* lands, and 'State lands' were at least *de jure* clearly recognized, the position of rights in the lands of extinct families (*gatkul jamin*) and waste lands (*pad jamin*) is not clear. The village-headman, the village-assembly (or local assembly) and the State all could and in fact did dispose of such lands. The question we are going to ask here is: by whom and under what conditions could lands of extinct families and waste lands be disposed of?

Before entering into the discussion of this problem, let us be clear about a few indigenous terms. As already pointed out, *gatkul jamin* means lands of the families that have gone away or passed away, viz. lands of extinct families. *Pad jamin* means lands which are left waste due to non-cultivation for a long period of time. Thus there could be, and in fact there were, *pad jamin* even among *miras jamin*, the rights in which were clearly recognized.[48] But here we are not concerned with that kind of waste lands. The *pad jamin* which interest us here are the lands left waste because of the extinction of their proprietary families.

Such waste lands were called either specifically '*gatkul jamin*',

or more generally '*pad jamin*'. That both the terms referred to lands of the same status is evident from the document translated before (see p. 164), in which 'the State waste lands' (*khalisa pad jamin*) of two *chavars* granted in *inam* to a village headman by King Shahu are recapitulated as 'lands of extinct families' (*gatkul set*).

Here the expression 'State waste lands' has appeared by chance. But this does not mean that all the waste lands were institutionalized as 'State lands'. Usually waste lands or lands of extinct families seem to have been left simply as 'waste lands' or 'lands of extinct families'. The headman of the village, the local or village assembly and the State could dispose of these lands, and this is discussed below.

(A) *Appropriation by Village-Headman*: Our sources include seven records which show that the village headman or local (village) assembly could dispose of lands of extinct families or waste lands of the village. Out of the seven records, two are concerned with headmen's appropriation and the other five with the disposal by the local assembly. The first two cases are examined here.

Record No. 1. Diaries, dated 17 December 1741, shows a lengthy (covering five pages) *vatan-patra* (official document confirming a hereditary office) which was granted by the Royal Secretariat (*chitnishi*) of King Shahu to Harpala, half-headman (*nime mokadam*, viz. holder of half the office of village headmanship), of Village Fursangi near Poona. According to it, a dispute took place between Harpala family and Kamath family regarding the succession to headmanship of the village, and both the disputants appealed to King Shahu. The King summoned to his court the *deshmukh* and the *deshpande* of the region, headmen of the neighbouring villages, and 'all the inhabitants' (*samakul pandhari*) of the village, held a justice-assembly and decided to divide the office of headmanship into two shares. What should be noted here is that the Kamaths and the Harpalas were allowed the privilege 'of taking half and half of the lands of extinct families if there are any in the village, . . . and

of taking half and half of the vacant houses of extinct families if there are any in the village'.[49]

Here the headmen were officially privileged 'to take' (*ghenen*) the lands of extinct families in the village. What exactly is the meaning 'of taking'? Were the lands that were thus taken by the headmen made revenue-free as *inam*? Such lands seem to have been treated as *miras* lands as is evident in the next record.

Record No. 2. As already pointed out, two Marathi records were translated into English and included in Sykes' report. One of these is a *mahajarnama* (document granted by a local assembly), covering eight pages, written in 1725 relating to the division of headman's office of Village Kowta, north of Sirvar, into three shares. Apart from the complicated circumstances of the case, there were initially two headmen in this village, abbreviated as A and B. They sold a third share of their office to C, headman of Village Multun, south of Village Kowta, in order to pay up the tax imposed on their village. But they did not actually transfer the share of the office to C, who therefore appealed to the Peshwa. The Peshwa ordered the *deshmukh* and the *deshpande* of the region to hold a local assembly and settle the dispute. The *deshmukh*, the *deshpande*, the headmen and accountants of the neighbouring twenty-five villages gathered together in Village Kowta, held an assembly and decided to divide the office into three parts. Attention should be drawn to two points in this record. First, as all the privileges, remunerations and land properties hitherto owned by both A and B were divided into three shares, all the *miras* lands owned by A and B were also divided into three shares. There were 35.25 *take* (a land unit) of *miras* lands when owned by A which included 18.75 *take* of 'lands of an extinct family named Udar' (Oodar Shait Gutkool, viz. *Udar shet gatkul*). In the same way, 28.75 *take* of *miras* lands when owned by B also included 18.75 *take* of 'lands of an extinct family named Udar' (Oodar Shait Gutkool).[50] It is not mentioned how and when A and B acquired the lands of this extinct family. But, if we refer to Record No. 1 above, we have little doubt that A and B had each 'taken' a half

of the lands of the extinct family sometime in the past as one of the privileges of village-headmen. It is evident that the lands thus 'taken' by the headmen were not recognized as revenue-free *inam* lands but *miras* lands on which the ordinary land revenue had to be paid.

The second point to be noted is that when the assembly asked A and B to give a third share of their respective house to C, they both complained that this was very inconvenient for them and they appealed, offering: 'we give instead the site of the neighbouring house of the deceased and Gutkool Neemba Tamboolee (*pan*-leaf-seller), in length 60 cubits and in width 60 cubits. . . .' The appeal was admitted by the assembly.[51] It shows that the headmen could appropriate the houses of extinct families (as in Record No. 1) or dispose of the house-sites of extinct families of the village (as in Record No. 2).[52]

In short, the headman of a village had the privilege of appropriating for himself waste lands of the village. But when he took advantage of this privilege, rather heavy land-revenue was imposed on the lands thus appropriated. To enlarge the holding of his *miras* lands in this way, the newly acquired lands were cultivated by *uparis* (tenants) through a share-cropping arrangement—as probably they were not always a profitable undertaking, although it certainly increased the headman's social prestige. This was so because a fixed amount of revenue had to be paid on the *miras* lands irrespective of the state of harvest, unless specially remitted for reasons of crops failure. In view of this situation the headmen of many villages would desist from taking over waste lands which would then remain unappropriated. The headman could not arbitrarily sell or give away such waste lands, for to do that an agreement of the village assembly or at least of the local representative had to be obtained.

(B) *Disposal by Local Assembly*: We have five records which show how waste lands were disposed of by the local assembly. Three of these are concerned with the disposal of waste lands as *miras* lands, and two show the disposal as *inam* lands. We shall examine the conditions of these disposals one by one.

Record No. 1. We have a 'copy based on the original' (*nakal*

asal bamojib) of a *vatan-patra* dated 9 May 1752. This shows that the *deshmukh* and the *deshpande* of region (*karyat*) Sasvad and the headman (*mokadam*) of town (*kasbe*) Sasvad jointly received a petition from two peasant brothers, surnamed Sinde, who had been 'now living' (*hali vasti*) in the town for a long time (*bahut divas*), and awarded to them permanently (*putra-pautradi vanshparanparenen*) '1.5 *khandi* (30 *bighas*) of land (*jamin*) in the block (*thal*) named Amba' as '*miras* lands' (*set thal mirasichen*). The condition of granting these lands was 'to pay the land tax to the government that will be imposed according to rules' (*divanacha sara vahati pramanen jo padal to deun*).[53]

In this case it is not evident whether the granting party received any money from the peasant brothers. At any rate, this record shows that it was not the headman of the town (*mokadam*) himself but the *deshmukh*, the *deshpande* and the *mokadam*, three representative persons of the place, that gave 1.5 *khandi* of land in Town Sasvad. This happened in a fairly large town, where the *deshmukh* and the *deshpande* of the region usually lived. It appears that only the representative persons of the place could dispose of the waste lands of the town, without consulting ordinary people of the place. But when the disposal took place in a village (distinct from 'town') where the *deshmukh* and the *deshpande* of the region did not usually live, a number of ordinary villagers also took part in the transaction as shown below.

Record No. 2. K. V. Purandare of Sasvad has introduced the copy of a lengthy *vatan-patra* dated 22 May 1731. This record shows that a peasant, who belonged to the headman's lineage (surnamed Jagdale) of Village Garade, Tarf Karhepathar, Pragane (Pargane) Pōona, was granted one *chavar* of land in 'a block named Bhagadik' as *miras* by the 'village assembly' (*majalsi samakul pandhar*) of the village. The following were present (*hajir*) at the assembly: an agent (*kamavisdar*) in service of a man called Rajshri Son Thakurbaba *inamdar* (who must have held *inam* lands in the village), three headmen (*patils*) surnamed Jagdale; seven peasants also surnamed Jagdale, one washerman (*parit*), one carpenter (*sutar*), one gardener (*mali*), one blacksmith

(*lohar*), one guest-bard (*bhat mehman*), two astrologer-accountants (*joshi-kulkarni*), one assistant headman (*chaugula*), one barber (*nhavi*), one untouchable (*mahar*), one keeper of temple (*gurav*)—all perhaps from the village concerned, as well as an agent of the *deshpande* of the region and thirteen other persons from the neighbouring villages and hamlets (*majeri*), altogether thirty-four persons. The duty of the grantee as fixed by the assembly was 'to pay (the revenue) according to rules' (*vahatipramanen ugavni karnen*).[54]

Record No. 3. One of the two Marathi records translated into English and included in Sykes' report has already been discussed. Another record is a *miras patra* which was granted by 'the Mokuddum, chief shares in the Pateel's office and authority, and all the principal persons of the villages (village?) of Multun, Pergunnah, Kurdeh, Surkar, Joonur,' to a son of a headman of a nearby village, when the assembly sold 'a *chowar*, namely, 12 rookas of land, from the two *chowars* of the *thul* or estate, called Sandus' as well as 'a site for a house' in the village by defining four corners at the price of Rs 100. Those who attended this assembly were: four headmen, one assistant headman (*chougleh*), five (perhaps) peasants, one chief of shop-keepers, one gardener, one *gurav* (temple-keeper) of the village as well as one gardener of another village and one person named Ballajee Bajee Rao Bhaweh (total being fifteen). The buyer is commanded by the assembly to observe as follows: 'Including the well, the permanent assessment is 50 rupees yearly, and upon this there will be no other charge beyond the rights of hukdars (persons having trifling hereditary fees, or rights on the village lands) and the pay of the koolkurnee (village accountant), agreeably to the usage and practice of the village.' (Bracketed explanations are of Sykes.) This deed was attested by fourteen other persons of the village who did not attend the assembly and was hand-written by the astrologer-accountant.[55]

Of the three records referred to above, No. 1 and No. 2 do not show if the grantees of lands paid any money to the assembly, while in No. 3 the grantee paid Rs 100. This may be explained in this way: in No. 1 the grantees lived in the town, and in No. 2

the grantee was in the lineage of the headman of the village; that is, in these two cases the grantees were residents of the place, whereas in No. 3 the grantee, though a son of a village-headman, was from different village, therefore he had to pay a price for the land. In any case, even in No. 3, the price of *miras* land was rather cheap compared to the assessment upon it.

The above three records are concerned with the disposal of lands as *miras* by the local assembly. But the local assembly could also dispose of lands in the village as *inam*. Such cases are shown in the following two records.

Record No. 4. The following story is narrated in *Diaries* of the year 1760. The headman (surnamed Povale) of Village Kolas, Tarf Chakan, Prant Junnar, borrowed Rs 17,000 from a man surnamed Gaykvad. Probably he borrowed the money to pay up the taxes imposed on his village. He transferred half of his headmanship to the creditor in lieu of Rs 7,000. He was unable however to repay the remaining Rs 10,000. Therefore 'all the villagers and Povale Patil discussed the matter and agreed to give an *inam* of 2.25 *khandi* (45 *bighas*, viz. about 13.5 hectares) to Gaykvad instead of (Rs) 10,000 and liquidate (the debt); they also agreed to bear the land-tax (*sara*) imposed on their village'.[56] They gave him (Gaykvad) a sales-deed (*kharedikhat*) to that effect. The government, after examining the deed, granted a *vatanpatra* to Gaykvad and commanded a local bureaucrat as follows: 'His land-tax will be properly imposed and that will be paid by Povale Patil and the villagers. Take it (tax) into the government item with acknowledgement. Gaykvad will have no connection with the land-tax due from the *inam* of 2.25 *khandi* mentioned above.'[57]

The above record clearly shows that a village as a group could dispose of or sell its waste lands as *inam* lands as necessary, that the receiver of such *inam* lands did not have to pay any tax on them, that the duty imposed by the government on such lands had to be met by the village as a whole.

Record No. 5. Similarly, when 'the headman and all the villagers' (*mokadam va samast pandhari*) gathered together and granted 72 *bighas* (about 21.6 hectares) of land in the village

to a Brahmin family as *inam*, the government decided the lands to be '*inam* in charge of the village' (*ganva nijbat inam*) and ordered the headman and the villagers 'to pay the land-tax (*sarya*) and other impositions (*patya*).'[58]

Even the *inam* lands granted by the village as a whole may often have been exempt from tax, if their size was small, as pointed out by Elphinstone. But in case of large *inam* lands thus granted by the entire village, it seems to have been a rule of the government to impose the tax due from the lands upon the village as a whole.

In short, the villagers as a group could also dispose of waste lands of the village. But if they were disposed of as *miras* lands, it was the grantee (new *mirasdar*) who had to bear a heavy land-tax, whereas if disposed of as *inam* lands, the villagers as a group were obliged to pay the land-tax on behalf of the grantee (new *inamdar*) if the *inam* was of a fairly large scale. In view of this situation, waste lands of many villages appear to have been left 'waste' without being disposed of. Such waste lands were eventually taken over (*de facto*) and used by the government as discussed below.

(C) *Disposal by Government*: As pointed out before, the government, on receipt of a petition from the headman of a village, allowed some *miras* lands situated near the inhabited area in the village to be used as house-sites, and compensated the *mirasdars* whose lands were taken by giving them in lieu lands of extinct families or waste lands of the village.[59] There were it seems mainly two other ways open to the government to make use of waste lands. One was to promote the cultivation of these lands through local bureaucrats and hereditary officers. The other was to confer waste lands upon some individuals and institutions as *inam* lands. The former way will be discussed in the next section. Instances of the government granting waste lands in the name of King or his Peshwa are too many to be all discussed. Only a few cases are mentioned below.

King Shahu gave 5 *bighas* (about 1.5 hectares) of waste land of Village Vadu of Prant Junnar as *inam* to a sweeper attached to the tomb (*vrindavan*) of the late King Sambhaji situated in

that village for his (the sweeper's) maintenance.[60] The third Peshwa granted altogether 1.5 *chavar* (1 + 0.5) of waste land as *inam* to the bereaved families of two horsemen (*shilledar*), who died in battle while in the service of the government.[61] He also donated 5 *bighas* of waste land as *inam* to a mosque built in a town in Salsette region,[62] 1.5 *bighas* of waste land as *inam* for the maintenance of a Hindu temple in a village,[63] and about 14 *bighas* of waste land as *inam* in Ratnagiri region to a Portuguese gunner (*Firangi golandaj*) who distinguished himself in the service to the Maratha government.[64] The seventh Peshwa also donated 1.5 *chavar* of waste land as *inam* to a Saivite monastery near Aurangabad.[65]

In short, waste lands or lands of extinct families, which were neither appropriated by the headmen of villages as their *miras* nor disposed of by the local assembly, reverted *de facto*, if not *de jure*, to the State. The government often granted such lands as *inam* (exempt from tax) to various persons and institutions such as hereditary officers, priests, distinguished servants of the State as well as temples and mosques. By making these persons and institutions self-supporting with incomes from the *inam*, the government may have had two aims in view: (1) economizing the State expenditure, for otherwise it would have been necessary to support them from the resources of the government, and (2) ensuring loyalty of the grantees to the ruling power because of their landed interests.

We may conclude this section with the following remarks:

Both Baden-Powell, who regarded the agricultural lands, excepting those held in *inam*, as practically owned by the State, and Professor Altekar, who emphasized the peasant ownership of all the agricultural lands, may be said to have over-simplified views of the reality. Professor Sen, who pointed out the existence of three kinds of lands—*inam*, *miras* and Government—got much closer to the actual situation. But he should have made it clear that there were large tracts of waste lands or lands of extinct families, in which the legal rights were not always clear, and that such lands could be disposed of by the village-headmen and the local (village) assemblies as well as by the State. The

same comments broadly apply to Elphinstone's report also. Sykes' report is not clear about *inam* and State lands, but his suggestion that there were waste lands of extinct families in many villages is significant; and he also emphasized that, during the Maratha period, the 'headmen or village authorities' disposed of such lands. He should, however, have stressed that the waste lands, appropriated by village-headmen, were treated as *miras* lands on which a heavy land-tax had to be paid, and that in case of waste lands disposed of by the local assemblies as *miras* lands, the receiver had to bear the land-tax, while those disposed of as *inam* lands were often converted into '*inam* in charge of village' and the village as a whole had to bear the tax on them as assessed.

At any rate, it may be said that the owner of *miras* lands (*mirasdar*) held a fairly well-established private proprietary rights in the lands. As regards *inam* lands, too, at least when they were attached to some hereditary office, the owner could dispose of them along with the office as he needed. On the other hand, waste lands or lands of extinct families could be appropriated by the village-headman as his *miras* lands or they could be disposed of by the local assemblies, as well as by the State.

So far we have discussed the rights in various kinds of agricultural lands mentioned in our sources. We will now turn our attention to finding out the kind of persons who actually cultivated the lands, and under what conditions?

III. PEASANTS

We shall first point out some common features of the peasants in the early nineteenth-century Deccan as described by British administrators.

At the beginning of this article we have quoted a lengthy extract from the report of Elphinstone (see section 1-2 of this article). From that quotation, three features about the peasants stand out. Firstly, there were two classes of peasants: the landed proprietors called *mirasi*, *mirasdar* or *thalkari*; and the farmers called *upari*. Secondly, the Maratha government made a *mirasdar*

pay more than an *upari*, so that the relationship between the two classes was not generally that of a landlord to his tenant. To be sure, Elphinstone does not mention this point but he calls *mirasdars* 'cultivators' which indicates that he found no such relationship between the two classes. And thirdly, *uparis* cultivated 'lands belonging to government' on lease.

W. Chaplin also recognizes two classes of peasants throughout the Maratha country: 'free-holder' (*miraṣdar*) and 'tenant-at-will' (*upari*). According to him, the approximate proportion of families of the two classes around the year 1820 was three to one in the Poona region, two to one in the Satara region, and one to one in the Ahmadnagar region.[66] Further, he states that, though a *mirasdar* occasionally lets out his lands to his 'co-partner or relations', 'a mirasdar may usually be considered both landlord and farmer, for as the land tax is commonly so high as to absorb all the landlord's rent, little surplus of profit is left, unless the cultivation of the land be undertaken by the mirasdar himself.'[67] Chaplin, then, points out that whereas a *mirasdar* usually paid fifty per cent of his gross produce, an *upari* actually paid much less, 'for the upari having but a precarious interest, must be compensated by a higher immediate profit. The profits of uparis in some places have indeed been found so large as to tempt mirasdars to throw up their watans (*viz*. miras lands) and to cultivate waste land on Cowle (Kaul, assurance of Government). This of course is not allowed, except on condition of their continuing to pay the public revenue due from their Miras (lands).'[68] (Matter within parenthesis added by the present author.)

These extracts from Chaplin's report describe the situation as in about 1820, two years after the British conquest of the Deccan. At any rate, it shows that (1) there were two classes of peasants; (2) a *mirasdar* paid more than an *upari* did, and accordingly the former was usually a landed cultivator rather than a landlord, and (3) *uparis* cultivated waste lands.

As quoted before (see p. 154 of this article), Skyes also says that there were two classes of peasants: land-proprietors (*mirasdar*, *thalkari*, or *thalwahi*) and renter (*upari*). He further

says in 1830, 'Although Miras, or hereditary land, was assessed permanently, yet it was at a higher rate than any other land, at least if we judge from the difficulty discoverable in village papers for the last half century of letting waste land at the Miras rate.'[69] Then he goes on: 'a great part of the land in the country is without proprietors; in consequence, a very numerous class of occupiers is the Upari. The proper meaning of this term is a stranger, or one who cultivates land in a village in which he has not any corporate rights. In practice he holds land on the Ukti tenure, which is a land-lease by a verbal agreement for one year. In this tenure the rates are not fixed; the parties make the best terms they can; . . .'[70]

Although it is evident from Sykes' statement that the *mirasdars* had to pay so much more than the *uparis* did that they (the former) could not be the latters' landlords, he is not clear as to whose lands the *uparis* cultivated. However, it is hinted that waste lands or lands of which there were no owners were let out to *uparis* on lease.

From the above extracts taken out of the reports written by the early British administrators, at least three questions arise in connection with the land-system discussed in the foregoing section.

Firstly, nothing is said in these reports as to who cultivated the *inam* lands: their owners or the *uparis*? Secondly, even if the *mirasdars* cultivated their *miras* lands themselves in the early decades of the nineteenth century as described by the British administrators, was this a general situation throughout the eighteenth century also? Was there a tendency towards the cultivation of *miras* lands by the *uparis* and the *mirasdars* becoming landlords? And thirdly, arising out of the second question, were the *uparis*, throughout the eighteenth century, tenants of State lands or waste lands? Was not, at some period, the cultivation or reclamation of State lands or waste lands promoted and encouraged politically with the result that *uparis* were mobilized for the purpose and they became the cultivators of such lands?

This section will be devoted to examining these questions.

Before entering into this discussion, a few words should be

mentioned about a limitation inherent in our source materials. Relevant to this section, there are some sixty records in Marathi collected from the source-books (see section 1-4 of this article). Only seven[71] of these are what may be called private records; the rest are official records. Probably due to this official character of the records, such general terms are used for peasants as *rayat* (or *rayet*), *loka*, *praja* (or *praja*), *kula*, or *kunbi*. Only rarely peasants are referred to as either *mirasdars* or *uparis*. *Rayat* is the corrupt form of Arabic *raiyat*, while *loka* and *praja* are Sanskrit words. All the three terms mean 'people' in general and 'peasants' in particular. The word *kula* came from the Sanskrit *kula* (= family, lineage). It meant 'people' in general and 'peasants' in particular as well as 'family'. On the other hand, *kunbi* is an indigenous term and meant 'peasants', more especially a caste whose traditional occupation was agriculture.[72] These terms are used interchangeably in our sources.[73] When such a general term is used, it is often difficult to be sure whether in some cases *mirasdars* or *uparis* were meant by it.

I shall try to assess in this section how heavy was the revenue burden (or rent) that a peasant had to bear in the period under review. Attention should be drawn here to another factor which adds to the difficulty of assessing the burden of revenue. The revenue system in the Maratha kingdom was by no means a simple one. As we will presently see, occasionally a certain proportion of the gross produce was collected in kind, but this method seems to have been rather an exception. The more common method was as follows: The government measurers (*amin* or *pahanidar*) were sent out to villages every now and then to take measures of the fields and to make assessments of the different crops in terms of cash per *bigha* (unit of land-measurement).[74] It is not quite clear how these assessments—from measuring lands to crops production, and from that to cash—were made. We cannot go into this problem here. There is a plan to make a detailed enquiry into the revenue-systems of this kingdom. For the present however we will simply show in the footnote an old work done on this topic by Professor S. N. Sen.[75]

1. Cultivation of Inam Lands: As mentioned before, the reports of the British administrators did not mention how the *inam* lands were cultivated. We shall first discuss this topic.

The sizes of *inam* lands and the economic and social standings of their holders were so uneven in the Maratha kingdom that the mode of their cultivation could not but vary. Some examples follow. In 1738, the *deshmukh* and the *deshpande* of Lalgun Buddha Panchganva region enquired into the duties and rights of the Mahars (an untouchable caste) of their region and informed their findings in a letter to their counterparts of Sasvad region. This letter enumerates seventeen items of duties and rights relating to the Mahars, two of which were: '1. (Mahars) should be engaged in miscellaneous jobs for a *patil* while "eating" the *harati* land. 2. (Mahars) should be engaged in miscellaneous job for the government (*divan*) while "eating *maharik*" land.'[76] There is little doubt that the *harati* land referred to above is a kind of *inam* land given to the Mahars by the village as a reward for doing miscellaneous jobs for the village-headman. Similarly the *maharik* land is a sort of *inam* land given by the government to the Mahars as a compensation for their labour such as carrying the luggage of local bureaucrats on their occasional visits to the village as well as for running as messengers for official purposes. 'To eat' (*khaun*) such a land perhaps means that the Mahars cultivated it for themselves.

Similarly some mosques and Hindu temples held small *inam* land (e.g. 1.5 *bighas* or about 45 ares), and a sweeper , attached to the tomb of a late king, held an *inam* land of 5 *bighas* (about 1.5 hectares).[77] Such small *inam* lands were no doubt cultivated by the keepers of the mosques (Mulana) and of the temples (Gurav), as also by the sweeper.

However, the areas of many *inam* lands were quite large. These were held by *deshmukhs* and *deshpandes*, headmen of villages, distinguished servants of the State and their families, and by noted temples, monasteries and mosques. The sizes of these lands were between 2 to 0.5 *chavars* (about 18 to 72 acres), a few even larger.[78] Such large *inam* lands were presumably cultivated by tenants. Some examples follow.

In a town called Ambejogai, perhaps about eighty miles north-west of Poona, there was a Jain temple (*devaghar*) since long past, which held 1 *chavar* of *inam* land in the town and several '*inam* villages' thereabout.[79] For cultivation of this *inam* land, two peasants, who were 'now residing in Kasbe Ambejogai', submitted the following agreement (*kabul katba*), dated 2 October 1701, to the temple:

> (We), Rayaji Roghe and Mavji Motlaskar, peasants (*mujeri*),[80] now residing in Town Ambejogai, write and submit the following agreement to you (*swami*)...(year).... You have 1 *chavar* of *inam* land in the town, which lay waste due to a disturbance (*dhamdhum*). We came and voluntarily requested you (to allow us to cultivate) the land by share-cropping (*batai*) on the promise (*bole*) of ten years. You have put the *inam* land of 1 *chavar* in our charge (*havala*) by share-cropping (*batai*); (We shall) cultivate (the land), and submit to you one half (*nime*) of the produce (*upaj*) of the land including grains (*gala*), stems (*kadba*), fodders (*gavat*), greens (*bhus*) and so on. And we shall take the other half. We shall not conceal (*tanakhori*) anything of these. This is our ...[a few words are missed].... This agreement (*katba*) is written by the pen of accountant (*kulkarni*) Ramaji Narasiva. Signature (date and greeting).[81]

The above record reveals two important points about the tenancy of *inam* land. Firstly, the condition of tenancy was fifty-fifty sharing of gross produce between the *inamdar* and the tenants. Secondly, the two tenant-peasants are stated as 'now residing' (*hali vasti*) in the town. This shows that they were not *mirasdar* peasants living permanently in the town but *upari* peasants who had migrated there from some other place and settled there temporarily.

To be sure, it is not certain if most of the tenants on *inam* lands were *upari* peasants. It is possible that there were *mirasdar* peasants as well who were tenants of *inam* lands.

At any rate, most of the *inam* lands appear to have been usually

arranged through share-cropping system. For instance, *Diaries* of the year 1752 states that in a village of Karhad region 'there is a share-cropper (*vatekari*) of Sardeshmukh, whose house was broken into by robbers, and three oxen, four cows, and one male-buffalo, altogether eight cattles were taken away . . .'[82] The indigenous term *vatekari* means a tenant who cultivates land by sharing (*vatni*) the produce. In any case, the above record suggests that Sardeshmukh had *inam* land in this village, which was cultivated by a share-cropper.

The above two instances of share-cropping arrangements between *inamdars* and tenants indicate that the former lived in the village or thereabout. But not all *inamdars* lived near the place where they had their lands. Especially the distinguished servants of the State or their families, who were awarded *inam* lands, would often stay away in the capital or other important cities and were, as it were, absentee landlords. In a situation like this the *inamdar* would appoint an agent who would stay in the village.[83] Or else the *inamdar* would entrust the cultivation of his *inam* land to the headman of the village and get him to remit to him (*inamdar*) the rent in cash as fixed. An arrangement like this might be made directly between the *inamdar* and the headman or indirectly through a third person as the following record reveals.

One Sadashivram Gune Kalekar, probably an eminent bureaucrat, had 1 *chavar* of *inam* land in Town Birvadi near Miraj. Regarding the cultivation of this *inam* land, Pareshram Ramchandra wrote the following letter, dated 5 October 1779, to a man who may have been the headman of the town. S. L. Atar, the editor of this record, thinks that Pareshram Ramchandra was probably the famous Parashram Bhau Patvardhan, who was an influential general of the Peshwa government.

> (Greetings, addressee's name and sender's name) Mr Sadashivram Gune Kalekar owns 120 *bighas* of *inam* land (viz. 1 *chavar*) (of the profit) of Rs 700 in the town. He is conducting through me the cultivation (*ravani*) of 20 *bighas* out of it with (the rent of) Rs 100. 100 *bighas* of land (of the rent) of

Rs 600 are still left. Please appoint (tenants for the cultivation of) the land of the first, second and third classes according to the rent (*dhara*) prevalent in Miraj region (date and greetings).[84]

While in the two records of 1701 and 1752 cited above, references are made to rent in kind, in that of 1779 rent is referred to in cash. From this one may infer that during this period the payment of rent in kind changed to that of rent in cash. This was not quite so, however. The difference was rather due to the fact that while the first two cases were concerned with resident *inamdars*, the third was about an absentee *inamdar*.

At any rate, it is not clear what proportion of the gross produce of land formed 'the rent prevalent in Miraj region'. The rent of Rs 5 to 6 per *bigha* seems to be too heavy for dry land (*jirayat*) but too light for wet land (*bagayat*) (see section III-3 of this article). It may be that this *inam* land was wet land and the tenants on it had in fact to pay more rent than what is shown in the record, and the difference was meant to be the income of, presumably, the headman of the town. Otherwise, even if this was wet land, the required number of tenants would be attracted only at such low rates of rent, for tenants in the second half of the eighteenth century may have been rather scarce due mainly to the expanded cultivation of waste lands on more favourable terms as will be discussed later.

2. *Cultivation of Miras Lands*: As discussed before, *miras* lands were owned by individual peasants including hereditary officers of the village and ordinary land-revenue was imposed on them. The owner of a *miras* land was called *mirasdar* or *mirasi* in Persian first introduced by the Muslims, and *thalkari* or *thalvai* in indigenous terms.

We find at least sixteen records that refer to *mirasdar*. Five of these are from Poona region,[85] six from Sasvad region,[86] three from Junnar region,[87] one from Satara region,[88] and one from Ratnagiri region.[89] They do not say much about the mode of cultivation of *miras* lands. From among these we will examine two records: one indicates that the *miras* land was let out to

upari peasants, while the other shows that the *miras* land was cultivated by its owner.

Record No. 1. In the first half of the eighteenth century, some kind of peace was maintained between the Marathas and the Mughals on the border regions of Junnar and Ahmadnagar. This was possible through sharing equally the revenue of the areas between the two governments. Parts of such regions were also assigned to bureaucrats in *jagir* (fief).[90] The extracts that follow are from the *Diaries* dated 1 January 1742. A clerk working under a *jagirdar*, who had three villages in Junnar region assigned to him, petitioned to the third Peshwa, 'The head-man and *mirasdar* peasants (of the three villages) have absconded owing to shortage of rainfalls and oppression by the Mughals. (But) the *upari* peasants remain in the villages. If an assurance for share-cropping (*batai*) is kindly granted to them (*upari* peasants), (they) will carry out the cultivation for the next year.'[91] In response the Peshwa's government sent the following assurance-letter (*abhaya-patra*) to each of the three villages; a similar order (*takid*) was also sent to the clerk: 'Collect the produce (*mal*) of the winter-crops (*rabi*), deduct the seeds (*bij*) (used for the winter-crops), divide the remaining produce as well as the produce (*mal*) of the summer-crops (*kharif*) into three shares (*tin hisse*), and (distribute) one share to the rayat, one of the remaining two to our government (*svarajya*, here the *jagirdar*), and another one to the Mughals. Besides, if there are any income (*akar*) of extra cash-impositions (*naktbab*), tax on fig-trees (*unbar-patti*), business-tax (*mohatarfa-bab*), mango-tax (*anbaanbali*) and *kamavis*-tax (fines and other miscellaneous dues), pay half of them to *svarajya* and another half to the Mughals. Rest assured and carry out cultivation according to rules.'[92]

To be sure, this record does not explain what the *upari* peasants had been doing in the villages until the point of time when the headmen and *mirasdar* peasants absconded. Presumably they had been engaged in cultivating the latter's *miras* lands, for we can infer two points from the situation: the headmen and the *mirasdars* ran away from the villages, but the *uparis* did not.

Firstly, the fact that drought and the oppression of the Mughals forced the headmen and *mirasdars* to run away from the village surely indicates that they were obliged to pay a fixed amount of land-revenue straight to the administrations; the *uparis* had no such obligation and so they remained in the village. It seems from this that the *uparis* did not cultivate State lands or waste lands on which a fixed amount of revenue had to be paid direct to the administrations; they cultivated some privately owned lands, viz. *miras* lands, as share-cropping tenants. They had therefore no reason to run away from their village. Secondly, the date of this record (January 1) shows that the winter-cultivation was already over and the winter-harvest was soon to begin. This means that the *uparis* were obliged to be present in their village in order to attend to harvest and receive their shares of the produce. But the prospect of crops was so bad that the headmen and *mirasdars* resorted to temporary absconding without waiting for the harvest. The *uparis* therefore felt uncertain as to whom to pay the rent, how much, and whether to undertake the cultivation for the next season or not. In the circumstances they appealed to the *jagirdar's* clerk for an assurance. The clerk in turn referred the case to the government, and the government assured the *uparis* that they were required to pay to the administrations neither more nor less than the shares (viz. two-thirds of gross produce) 'according to rules', which were normally due to the *mirasdar* landlords.

The above record seems to make sense only when interpreted in this way. The provision that the *uparis* were allowed to deduct only the seeds from the winter-crops may be a special concession in view of the bad prospect of the winter-harvest.

It is important to note the date—1742—of this record. In the early nineteenth century the British administrators found the *mirasdars* as generally cultivating their *miras* lands and the *uparis* as tenants of State lands or waste lands. This suggests: (1) during the *second* half of the eighteenth century, the cultivation of State lands and waste lands was promoted, and the *uparis* were mobilized for the purpose, and (2) the *mirasdars* themselves cultivated their *miras* lands. The first suggestion will be discussed

in the next sub-section. But what follows is an interesting record relevant to the second suggestion.

Record No. 2. On 7 October 1764, Police Office of the Centrally Administered Area of Koregau District (Divan Thane Mahal Khalsa Sarkar Koregau) sent the following letter to a man, Janapa Vani, who was assistant headman (*chaugula*) of Village Tadvale of the above District, but was 'now residing' in Village Hasuchivadi:

> [a seal, name of office, name of the addressee, his present residence, year] The headman of the above [Village Tadvale] has informed that you, being the *vatandar chaugula*, has absconded from the village. What is the reason for absconding? Now this letter is sent (to you). Then you should come back to the village and *cultivate your miras land*, and perform the work of assistant headmanship. Do have no fear on any account and come back with peace in mind. The land attached to the *vatandarship* (viz. *inam* land for assistant headmanship) shall also be given to you. Therefore come back [date]'.[93] (Matter within brackets and italics is mine.)

This record shows that in 1764 even an assistant headman of the village did, or at least was expected to, cultivate his *miras* land for himself. Moreover, this assistant headman's name indicates that he belonged not to any peasant caste but to some merchant caste (viz. vani).

3. Cultivation of State Lands and Waste Lands: As is well known, the Maratha kingdom reached its heyday during the reign of the second Peshwa Bajirao I (1720–40 in office). During his reign, the power of the Marathas expanded up to northern India, and the Maratha feudatory states were firmly established in Gujarat, Malwa, central and northern India.[94] This expansion of territories, however, had the effect on the Peshwa's government of increasing the expenditure for administrative and military purposes, with the inflow of wealth into the government treasury. It is said that when Balaji Bajirao (1740–61 in office) became the third Peshwa in 1740, the accumulation of

debt of the government at Poona amounted to about Rs 1.45 million.[95] In order to liquidate this debt the third Peshwa resorted to predatory expeditions to the Hindu kingdoms in south India and in Rajasthan. But such expeditions invited counter-expeditions, and as a result the financial condition of the Poona government became even worse. Moreover, luxurious living had become quite common among the nobles and high-class bureaucrats of the government. When the third Peshwa died in 1761, the debt accumulation of the government is variously estimated to have been between Rs 1.7 and Rs 10 million.[96]

In order to get over the financial problem, the third Peshwa resorted not only to predatory expeditions; he also devoted much attention to increasing agricultural production. A significant fact in this connection is that during the reign of the third Peshwa the major portion of soldiers under his direct control were recruited from among the north and south Indians; he also recruited Pathans and Arabs mercenaries. This had a demoralizing effect on the Maratha army which was one of the important factors that brought about the decline of the kingdom. To explain this 'denationalization' of soldiers, Professor S. N. Sen says, 'The Marathas were not very eager to spend whole year away from their home provinces and Balaji [the third Peshwa] enlisted mercenaries from all parts of India and outside India.'[97] But this explanation does not appear to be quite correct if we remember that before this time large numbers of Marathas had gone to distant provinces as bureaucrats and soldiers, settled in there, establishing feudatory states. A more adequate explanation would appear to be that the third Peshwa, as a measure of his agrarian policies, sent back home, or at least discouraged recruiting, indigenous soldiers, most of whom were peasants by origin; because of this it became necessary to enlist foreign mercenaries.

At any rate, so far as our sources indicate, the cultivation of State lands and waste lands appears to have been suddenly promoted and encouraged during and after the reign of the third Peshwa.

Balaji Bajirao became the third Peshwa in June of 1740, and

five months later mention is made in *Diaries* dated 15 November 1740 that the government sent a letter to the headmen of five villages in Konkan region, informing them that there were 'government demesne' (*sarkarchi sheri*) in the villages and 'half-and-half share-croppers of government' (*sarkarche ardheli*) were cultivating it; the headmen were further told that 'Government sugar-cane land of 2.5 *bighas*' (*sarkarcha us jamin bighe* 2.5) was also available in the villages, and that this land should be cultivated on the condition that the outer husk of the cane (*tus*) and the expenditure of cultivation be given by the government.[98] A few years later on 24 October 1744, the government ordered the hereditary officer of Village Vadajhiren of Tarf Karde (about ninety miles north-east of Poona), 'There is demesne land (*sheriche shet*) (in the above village), which is in charge of the government. You have been ordered to get it cultivated. Then appoint share-croppers (*sarik*) and get (them) to cultivate the demesne land. Of the produce (*akar*) therefrom, give (half) to share-croppers and send the remaining half in cash (*baki urla nime aivaj*) to the government.'[99]

The term *sarik* is the corrupt form of Arabic *sharik*; it means a 'sharer', the same as the indigenous term *vatekari* mentioned before. There is little doubt that during the 1740s the cultivation of State lands was promoted in many places on fifty-fifty share-cropping basis.

The cultivation of waste lands seems to have been greatly encouraged after 1750. For instance, *Diaries* dated 15 February 1750 mentions that the government gave an assurance (*abhaya*) on seven items to Pargana Pinpalganva Basavant and Pargana Chandvad of Junnar region, among which were the following three:

(1) When a waste land is brought under new cultivation, the rule of getting revenue (*ugavni*) per *bigha* for that land is defined as follows:

A. Rupees per *bigha* of dry black soil (*kale jamin*).
Rs 0.25 in the first year, Rs 0.5 in the second year, Re 1 in the third year, Rs 1.5 in the fourth year, Rs 2

in the fifth year. (The standard rent—*dhara*—of the already cultivated dry black soil is Rs 2 per *bigha* per year.)

B. Rupees per *bigha* of hillside sandy soil (*barad mal jamin*).
Rs 0.125 in the first year, Rs 0.25 in the second year, Rs 0.5 in the third year, Rs 0.75 in the fourth year, Rs 1 in the fifth year. (The standard rent of the already cultivated hillside sandy soil is Re 1 per *bigha* per year.)[100]

(2) When a water-canal (*adavya pat*) is constructed on waste land, to turn it into wet land (*bagayat*), the rule of revenue per *bigha* of the land is: Rs 5 per *bigha* in the first year, Rs 6 per *bigha* in the second year, Rs 7 per *bigha* in the third year, Rs 8 per *bigha* in the fourth year, Rs 10 per *bigha* in the fifth year. (The standard rent of the already cultivated wet land is Rs 10 per *bigha* per year.)[101]

(3) The business people (*udmi loka*) who are now in the villages should pay the revenue (*mahasul*) according to rule. If new families (of business people) are brought with an assurance, they shall be exempt (*pal*) from tax for three years, and from the fourth year, they ought to pay according to rule.[102]

The first two items show that those who reclaimed waste lands were required to pay on them 'annually increasing rent' (viz. *istava* rent) for the first four years, and then the standard rent from the fifth.

At this stage the government seems to have only passively received petitions from the hereditary officers of the region for assurances which were confirmed and granted. But soon, it was made a duty for the local revenue collectors to promote the cultivation of waste land.

For example, on 17 February 1760, the government appointed a collector (*kamavisdar*) for the Puntambe region of Sangamner District, his duties were specified which contained eighteen

items. The following were among them: 'if any waste land lies waste, undertake its cultivation by giving assurance for two, three, four years. Do not leave waste land' (*padjamin padli ahe, tichi lavni dusala, tisala, chausala, kaul deun karavi padjamin rahun na dyavi*), and 'if any waste land is not cultivated (your) office will not last long' (*padjamin lavni na jali tar mamla parichchhinna rahnar nahin*).[103] Further, on 13 December of the same year, when the government appointed another collector (*kamavisdar*) for Pargana Van and Pargana Dindori to the north of Nasik, he was commanded as follows: 'if there is any waste land in the villages of the above Parganas, undertake its cultivation. Undertake the cultivation in two or three years from this year. If the cultivation of waste land is not undertaken, (your) office will not last long' (*Pargane majkurin ganvaganna pad jamin asel tichi lavni karavi. salmajkurapasun do ti sala lavni karavi. pad jaminichi lavni na jali tari parichchhinna mamla rahnar nahin*).[104]

Although the cultivation of waste land was promoted in this way, the financial situation of the Poona government did not improve. And after the short reigns of the fourth, the fifth and the sixth Peshwas, the seventh Peshwa Madhavrao Narayan (1774–96 in office) encouraged the creation of 'new fields' (*nutan jamin* or *nutan shet*) by reclamation, at least in the Ratnagiri region (narrow belt-like region between the Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea). For instance, on 4 January 1775 the government issued the following assurance to the local bureaucrats, the headmen of villages and the peasants (*rayani*) of Anjanvel area of the Ratnagiri region: 1. 'Those peasants (*rayat*) who create new fields (*nutan jamin*) out of rocky lands (*dagad sada*), on which neither tree nor grass grows, by filling them up with earth brought from other places, or those who create new fields (*nutan shet*) by breaking rocky hills and filling them up with earth'[105] shall have half of the new fields in *inam*, while the other half shall be exempt (*mafi*) from rent for twenty years, then only a light rent (*kamdhara*) shall be levied for the next five years, and thereafter assessed according to the standard rule. 2. 'Those peasants (*rayat*) who create new fields (*nutan shet*) by

constructing dams (*bandhbandist*) on the drained land along the sea-coast'[106] shall have one-fourth of the new fields in *inam*, while the periods of exemption and of light rent shall be decided after considering the expenditure and the labour spent for the purpose.

And after forty days, on 13 February 1775, a similar assurance was given to the Svarnadurg area of the same region.[107]

It is not clear if the peasants who brought State land, waste land, or 'rocky land' under cultivation were awarded with the *miras* right in the land excepting the land specially granted in *inam*. Perhaps they were not, for the early British administrators found that the cultivators of government lands and the like were tenants, and not *mirasdars*. At any rate, the foregoing discussion shows that since the time of the third Peshwa the cultivation of State land, waste land, and so forth was promoted and encouraged on certain favourable terms.

Let us now look into the question: what kind of peasants were mobilized for the cultivation, and from where?

At present, we cannot be definite about the matter. But it seems however unlikely that, during the second half of the eighteenth century, a large number of peasants would be brought into *svarajya* of the Maratha kingdom from other provinces of India. Nor is it likely that *a great number* of *upari* peasants were likely to be *suddenly* generated during the same period. Probably a good number of *upari* peasants already existed in the *svarajya* before the middle of the eighteenth century as the two examples shown above (see sections III-1 & III-2 of this article) seem to show: What seems to have happened is that the *upari* peasants that existed scattered in the *svarajya* were mobilized for cultivation using the following methods. Firstly, there were many *upari* peasants who cultivated *miras* lands and paid perhaps two-thirds of the gross produce to the landowners as indicated before (see section III-2 of this article). In such cases, the *upari* peasants would be mobilized for the cultivation of State lands, waste lands and such other lands on more favourable terms. Secondly, in the year 1765, for instance, when an epidemic took place in a village of Kalyan region and many people died or fled the village,

the government ordered a bureaucrat of the region: 'There may be closely neighbouring villages. Make them [people from those villages] cultivate the lands [of the vacated village] by visiting cultivation (*payinkasta*)'.[108] Accordingly, when there was a shortage of *upari* peasants in any village, those who happened to live in the neighbouring villages would be mobilized for the cultivation of State and waste lands of the village by visiting cultivation. And thirdly, as shown before, two *parganas* of the Junnar region were assured by the government that 'if new families [of business people] are brought with an assurance, they shall be exempt from tax for three years.' (See section III-3 of this article.) Similar measure was resorted to regarding peasants also. For example, in 1814 a man, probably a hereditary officer of the Bassein region, wished to reclaim, by constructing a dam, a land that had been exposed to sea-water and had lain waste for many decades, and he petitioned to the government for granting an exemption from rent. In response the last Peshwa assured him of the exemption for twenty-five years through the governor (subhedar) of the region. At the end of this assurance-letter, it said: 'If peasants of other areas are brought for the cultivation of the land, they will build their houses on the border of the village, chain up their cattle, and live. They shall be exempt from house-tax and forced labour. Rest assured, construct the dam, and undertake agriculture. This is assured.'[109] This means that when there was a shortage of peasants in any place or neighbouring ones, the local bureaucrats or hereditary officers were expected to go to 'other areas', show attractive terms to the peasants of those places, and induce them to take up cultivation of waste lands and so forth. If any peasant responded to the attractive terms and came to the new place he would usually be treated as *upari* rather than *mirasdar*.

IV. CONCLUDING REMARKS

We may conclude our study as follows:

In the eighteenth century Maratha kingdom, the mode of cultivation of *inam* land was by no means uniform. Small *inam*

lands would be cultivated by the owners themselves, while large ones were as a rule let out to tenants. The tenants would usually be *upari* peasants. The rent was paid either in kind or in cash. The rent usually amounted to a half of the gross produce. It would appear that the proportion of *inam*-rent decreased gradually in the second half of the eighteenth century as the cultivation of State land or waste land was promoted and expanded.

Many *mirasdars* seem to have let out their *miras* lands to *uparis* by share-cropping arrangement, rent being probably two-thirds of gross produce, before the middle of the eighteenth century.

But since the reign of the third Peshwa, the government of Poona appears to have promoted the cultivation of State land in order to mitigate the financial difficulty on the fifty-fifty share-cropping basis. And after 1750 onward, the cultivation of waste lands and even rocky lands was encouraged on more favourable terms. The peasants who responded to such promotion and encouragement seem to have usually been *uparis* who had been tenants of *inams* lands and more especially of *miras* lands.

As a result, *mirasdar* peasants would come to cultivate their *miras* lands by themselves during the second half of the eighteenth century.

Hence, British administrators generally observed the *mirasdars* as landed cultivators and *uparis* as tenants of State lands or waste lands in the first decades of the nineteenth century.

At any rate it appears that some remarkable changes took place in the agrarian economy of the Maratha kingdom in the second half of the eighteenth century.

NOTES

1. B. H. Baden-Powell, *The Indian Village Community*, London, 1896; reprinted New Haven, 1957, pp. 423–4.
2. Ibid., p. 426.
3. B. H. Baden-Powell, *Land-Systems of British India*, London, 1892; vol. III, pp. 373–4.
4. A. S. Altekar, *A History of Village Communities in Western India*, Oxford University Press, 1927, p. 85.

5. Ibid., p. 86.
6. Ibid., p. 85.
7. S. N. Sen, *Administrative System of the Marathas*, Calcutta, 1st ed., 1923, pp. 204–5; 2nd ed., 1925, pp. 237–9.
8. On Baden-Powell's works, Professor T.Matsui of Japan has written a fine article. See T. Matsui, 'B. H. Baden-Powell's Works, A Study' in *The Aoyama Journal of Economics*, vol. 14, nos. 1 & 3.
9. B. H. Baden-Powell, *The Land-Systems of British India*, 1892, vol. III, p. 257, note 1.
10. It was only in 1843 that the Bombay government started a serious enquiry into the *inams* of the Deccan. See A. T. Etheridge, *Narrative of the Bombay Inam Commission and Supplementary Settlements*, Bombay, 1874, p. 58.
11. M. Elphinstone, *Report on the Territories Conquered from the Paishwa*, pp. 21–3.
12. Ibid., pp. 23–5.
13. Ibid., p. 28.
14. Ibid., p. 21.
15. Ibid., pp. 26–7.
16. W. H. Sykes, *Report of the Land Tenures of the Dekkan*, pp. 5–7.
17. Ibid., pp. 3–4.
18. Ibid., p. 18.
19. Ibid., p. 29.
20. Ibid., p. 8.
21. Regarding these nine volumes of *Diaries*, see M. G. Ranade, 'Introduction to the Peshwa's Diaries', *Journal of Bombay Branch of the Asiatic Society*, vol. XX, 1900; reprinted in *Shivaji and the Rise of the Mahrattas*, ed. by Susil Gupta Ltd., Calcutta, 1953, pp. 53–86. G. S. Sardesai, *Hand Book to the Records in the Alienation Office, Poona*, Bombay Government, 1933.
22. This book contains two hundred and eighteen documents in Marathi, mostly of the eighteenth century, collected from the Sasvad region and edited by Professor R. V. Oturkar in collaboration with Shri K. V. Purandare of B. I. S. Mandal of Poona.
23. These volumes contain nine hundred and twenty-three documents in Marathi, mostly of the eighteenth century, collected from the Deccan regions and examined, selected and edited by B. I. S. Mandal of Poona.
24. For example, *ASS*, vol. IV, no. 94 '*...tyas kalivar set nahi pandha-*

rivar ghar nahi .·. .' (he has neither field in *kali* nor house in *pandhari*).

25. T. N. Atre, *Ganva-Gada*, Poona, 1915, p. 1.
26. See *SSRPD*, vol. VI, no. 751.
27. See ch. 6 of this book.
28. *SSRPD*, vol. VII, no. 433, pp. 22–3.
29. cf. M. T. Patvardhan: *Farsi-Marathi-Kosh*, Poona, 1925, p. 195. '*miras; mirasi. . . . mirasdar, thalkari, vatandar mhant*'.
30. For example, see *SSRPD*, vol. I, no. 283.
31. *ASS*, vol. VIII, no. 52.
32. *SSRPD*, vol. VI, no. 748.
33. A. T. Etheridge, *Narrative of the Bombay Inam Commission and Supplementary Settlements*, Bombay, 1874, p. 90.
34. *SSRPD*, vol. I, nos. 296, 298; vol. III, nos. 521, 522.
35. *Oturkar*, no. 56.
36. Ibid., no. 46.
37. *SSRPD*, vol. I, no. 283.
38. Ibid., vol. II, nos. 171, 181.
39. *ASS*, vol. I, no. 126.
40. *SSRPD*, vol. VIII, no. 711.
41. e.g., *ASS*, vol. I, no. 126; vol. VIII, no. 46.
42. *SSRPD*, vol. I, no. 283, p. 137. Similarly, examples of the sales or transfer of *inam* lands attached to the village-headmanship can be found in *SSRPD*, vol. III, nos. 521 and 522.
43. See section II-4-(C) of this article.
44. H. H. Wilson, *A Glossary of Judicial and Revenue Terms and of Useful Words . . . of British India*, new ed., Calcutta, 1940, pp. 760–1.
45. *ASS*, vol. VIII, no. 46.
46. Ibid., vol. VIII, nos. 30–45.
47. *SSRPD*, vol. VI, no. 749.
48. A village headman had 10 *bighas* of *pad jamin* out of his *miras* lands converted into *inam* lands by the government. See *SSRPD*, vol. I, no. 366.
49. *SSRPD*, vol. I, no. 298, p. 169. '*mauje majkurin gatkulachin sheten astil tin Kamathiyanin va tuhmin ninmenin ghyaven. . . . Ganvant gatkulache vade bakhal asel te Kamathiyanin va tuhmin ninmenim ghyave.*'
50. W. H. Sykes, *Report of the Land Tenures of the Dekkan*, op. cit., p. 24.

51. Ibid., pp. 24–5.
52. Similar instance can be found in *SSRPD*, vol. I, no. 289, p. 150.
53. *ASS*, vol. V, no. 72. '. . . *vatanpatra Rajshri Deshmukh va Mokadam va Dhondo Malhar Purandhare Karyat Sasvad taha Baburao va Tukoji bin Bhikaji Sinde hali vasti Kasbe majkur* . . . (year) . . . *tumhi yeun arj kela je Kasbe majkuri apna bahut divas rahato vada tumhi dilha ahe parantu set thal mirasichen asave tyajvarun baraye arj khatres anun Anbethalpaiki jamin khandi did dilhe ase tyas chahu tarfes tivadhekari dakshnes Mauje Supe yethil siva va pashchmes Jakhoji Jagthap utares Sakraji Patil. . . .*'
54. *ASS*, vol. III, no. 306 (in B. I. S. Mandal, *Quarterly*, vol. XVIII, no. 3, January 1938).
55. W. H. Sykes, *Report of the Land Tenures of the Dekkan*, op. cit., pp. 27–9.
56. *SSRPD*, vol. III, no. 487. '*samast kali, pandhari va Povale Patil yannin vichar kela kin, sava don khandi inam, daha hajarans Gaykvad yas deun mukt vhaven. tyacha sara apna dyava.*'
57. Ibid., '*tyacha sara vajvi hoil to Povale Patil va ganvakari det jatil. to sarkar rakment majura ghet janen. Gaykvad yajkades sadarhu sava don khandi inamachya saryacha talka nase.*'
58. *SSRPD*, vol. VI, no. 710, p. 216. '*ekun ardha chavar bara bighe jamin sarya va patya tuhmi dyavayachya karun ganva nijbat jamin inam . . .*'
59. *SSRPD*, vol. VI, no. 748. See Section II.1 of this article.
60. Ibid., vol. I, no. 88. As to the circumstance of the death of Sambhaji, see G. S. Sardesai, *New History of the Marathas*, 2nd imp., Bombay, 1957, vol. I, p. 326.
61. Ibid., vol. II, no. 146.
62. Ibid., vol. II, no. 171.
63. Ibid., vol. II, no. 181.
64. Ibid., vol. II, no. 192.
65. Ibid., vol. VIII, no. 1038.
66. W. Chaplin, *A Report exhibiting a View of the Fiscal and Judicial System of Administration introduced into the Conquered Territory above the Guts, under the Authority of the Commissioner in the Dekkan*, 1824, rep. 1877, Bombay, pp. 41–3. I am grateful to Mr T. Yamazaki of the Tokyo University for allowing me to use this report.
67. Ibid., p. 37.

68. Ibid., p. 37.
69. W. H. Sykes, *Report of the Land Tenures of the Dekkan*, op. cit., p. 6.
70. Ibid., p. 7.
71. These seven records are as follows: *Oturkar*, nos. 37, 48, 49, 70, 87. *ASS*, vol. v, no. 57. Bharat Itihas Sanshodhak Mandal (ed.), *Shiva Charitra Sahitya*, vol. v, no. 802 (in B. I. S. Mandal, *Quarterly*, vol. 18, no. 1, July 1937).
72. H. H. Wilson, *A Glossary of Judicial and Revenue Terms . . . of British India*, new ed., Calcutta, 1940, p. 474.
73. *Rayat = loka = kula* (*SSRPD*, vol. III, no. 339); *rayat = kula* (Ibid., vol. VI, no. 716); *rayat = loka* (Ibid., vol. VI, no. 817, vol. III, no. 339).
74. e.g. *SSRPD*, vol. III, no. 328; vol. no. 189; vol. VI, nos. 718, 721.
75. See S. N. Sen, *Administrative System of the Marathas*, University of Calcutta, 1st ed., 1923, pp. 245 ff; 2nd ed., 1925, pp. 277ff.
76. *Oturkar*, no. 46, p. 32. '*1. Harati jamin khaun patilachenthe rabave kalm. 1. Maharik jamin khaun divanche rabanuk karavi kalm.*'
77. See section II-4-(C) of this article.
78. See sections II-3 & II-4-(C) of this article.
79. See *Shiva Charitra Sahitya*, op. cit., vol. v, nos. 790-802 (in B. I. S. Mandal: *Quarterly*, vol. 18, no. 1).
80. M. T. Patvardhan, *Farsi-Marathi-Kosh*, Poona, 1925, p. 198 (*mujeri = khedut, kunbi*).
81. *Shiva Charitra Sahitya*, op. cit., vol. v, no. 802. '*Rajman Rajeshri Devaji Gosavi. Kabul katba svamiche sevasi Rayaji Roghe va Mavji Motlaskar mujeri halin vasti Kasbe Abejogai suhur sana 1111 maharajache sevesi katba lihun dilha yesa je tumche inamche set chavar 1 Kasbe majkuri ahe to dhamdhumekaritan padila hota te set apne yeun aple khushinen tumhas varsa 10 che bole batainen magitlen tumhi inamache set chavar 1 aple havala bataine kele ase kirdi karun jo upaj gala va kadba va gavat va bhus vagaire tya setant hoil te nime svamis deun nime apna gheun yas kahi tanakhori na karun he aple + + + sudur ase ha katba sahi bakalm Ramaji Narasiva Kulkarni. Tarikh 10 roj mahe Jamadilaval, gohi, ghasni mortab.*'
82. *SSRPD*, vol. I, no. 235. '*Mauje Retharen harnakshachen Prant Karhad yansi takid Mauje Hmasoli Prant majkur yethen Sardesh-*

mukhakadil vatekari yachen ghar choranen fodun bail 3 tin, hmashi 4 char va reda 1 ekun 8 guren nelin tyancha mag Mauje majkuras ala....'

83. See Section II-4-(B) of this article.
84. *ASS*, vol. v, no. 57. '*Shri ganavati assal. Rajshriya virajit rajmanya Rajshri Lakshman Ghonddev Kasbe Bhilvadi svami gosavi yansi. Sevak Pareshram Ramchandra namaskar vinanti upari yethil kushal janun svakiye lihit jane vishesh Rajshri Sadashiv Ram Gune Kalekar yas Kasbe majkuri yekse vis bighe jamin satse rupyechi inam ahe tyajpaiki vis bighe jaminichin lavani shanbhar rupayachi masharnilhe aple marfatine karit astat baki shabhar bighe jamin sahase rupayachi rahili ti aval dum sim Miraj Prantatil dharyapramane nemun dene janije chh 24 Ramjan Suhursana samanin maya va alaf bahut kaya lihine he vinanti.*'
85. *SSRPD*, vol. I, no. 296 (*thalkari*), no. 298 (*thalvaik kunbi*); vol. III, no. 397 (*vatandar kunbi*); vol. VII, no. 433 (*kunbi thalkari mirasdar*). *Oturkar*, no. 70. (*thalkari*).
86. *SSRPD*, vol. III, no. 521 (*mirashiche sheten*). *Oturkar*, no. 37 (*thalvaik kunbi*), no. 48 (*thalvai*), no. 49 (*thalvai*), no. 56 (*mirashichi sete*), no. 139 (*thalkari*).
87. *SSRPD*, vol. III, no. 327 (*mirasdar kunbi*), no. 522 (*mirashichi sheten*); vol. VI, no. 748 (*mirasdar*).
88. *SSRPD*, vol. I, no. 303 (*thalvaik*).
89. Ibid., vol. VII, no. 546 (*vatani shet*).
90. Vide *SSRPD*, vol. III, no. 334.
91. Ibid., vol. III, no. 327. '*... sadarhu tin ganvin pauspani nahin va Mongalache kasale bhari yajkaritan patil va mirasdar kunbi paraganda jale. upari kunbi ganvavar ahet tyans bataicha kaul diliyanen pestar salchi kird houn yeil hmanoṇ Mir Mohamud Khan jahagirdar yanchkadil Govind Yashvant karkun Hujur yeun vidit kelen*'.
92. Ibid., vol. III, no. 327. '*tyavarun mamurivar najar deun bataicha kaul sadar kela rabiche malachen bij ubhe rasis kadhun, rahila mal va kharifacha mal jaisa jo hoil tyache tin hisse paikin ek hissa rayates; don hisse rahile tyas ek hissa svarajya va ek hissa Mongalai yenenpramanen. va nakdibab unbarpatti va mohatarfa bab va anba anbali va kamavis yacha jo akar hoil to nimen svarajya va nimen Mongalai yenenpramanen deun sukhrup rahun kird mamulipramanen karnen hmanon....*'
93 *Oturkar*, no. 56. '(*Haibatrao Bhavanishankaṛacha ashtakoni*

aspashta Marathi 6 olincha shikka) Ajdivan Thane Mahal Khalsa Sarkar Koregau taha Janapa Vani chaugula Mauje Tadvale Sarkar majkur hali vasti Mauje Hasuchivadi suhursana khamas sitain maya alaf tu vatandar chaugula gavatun paragada jahala ahes mhanun patil majkur yani vidit kele tari paragada hovayasi karne kaye hali patra sadar kale ahe tari tumhi gavavari yeun apli mirasichi sete karne va chaugulikicha karbhar karne konhavisi vasvasa na dharita sukhrup yene tujhe vatandariche sete tujla deu tari yene chh 11 Ravilakhar mortab sud'.

94. See V. G. Dighe, *Peshwa Bajirao I & Maratha Expansion*, Bombay, 1944.
95. H. N. Sinha, *Rise of the Peshwas*, 2nd ed., Allahabad, 1954, p. 217.
96. G. S. Sardesai, *New History of the Marathas*, 1st imp., Bombay, 1948, vol. II, p. 459.
97. S. N. Sen, *The Military System of the Marathas*, new ed., Oriental Longmans, 1958, p. 62.
98. *SSRPD*, vol. III, no. 405.
99. Ibid., vol. III, no. 333. '*Mauje Vadajhiren Tarf Karde yethil sherichen shet ahe; ten sarkarant thevilen ahe. tyachi lavani karavyasi tuhmans ajna keli ase. tari te sheriche shetachi lavni sarik theun karnen. tethil akar hoil to sarikas deun baki urla nime aivaj sarkarant pavta karnen. hmanon Ramaji Narayan ajhat kulkarni Mauje majkur yas patra.*'
100. *SSRPD*, vol. III, no. 339, p. 211. '*navi lavni padjaminnichi hoil, te jaminis darbigha ugavni karavyacha shirasta yenenpramanen karar karun dilha ase*:

kale jaminis dar bigha rupaye.				*barad mal jaminis dar bigha rupaye*			
0.25	*pahile salin.*			*0.125*	*pahile salin.*		
0.5	*dusre salin.*	*1.5*	*chauthe salin.*	*0.25*	*dusre salin.*	*0.75*	*chauthe salin.*
1	*tisre salin.*	*2*	*panchve salin.*	*0.5*	*tisre salin.*	*1*	*panchve salin.*

101. Ibid., vol. III, no. 339, p. 211. '*padjamin asel tyas dar bighiyas ugavni shirasta adavya patache jaminis rupaye pahile salin dar bigha rupaye 5, dusre salin dar bigha rupaye 6, tisre salin dar bigha rupaye 7, chauthe salin dar bigha rupaye 8, panchve salin dar bigha rupaye 10.*'

102. Ibid., vol. III, no. 339, p. 212. '*udmi loka hallin ganvant ahet tyanjpasun shirastepramanen mahasul ghyava. navin kulen kaul deun anavin, tyans tin salen palaven, chauthe salapasun mahasul shirastepramanen ghyava*'.
103. Ibid., vol. III, no. 425, pp. 280–1.
104. Ibid., vol. III, no. 431, p. 293.
105. *SSRPD*, vol. VI, no. 737, pp. 243–5. '*dagad sada ahe tye jaga jhaden va gavat kanhinch hot nahin, tethen baherun mati anun ghalun, nutan jamin shet hoye; va dongarantil dagad phodun vodha nala asel tyas mati ghalun nutan shet hoy aisen karavyas rayat umedvar ahe*'.
106. Ibid., p. 243. '*daryagark khajni jaminis bandh bandist karun nutan shet hoy aisen karavyas rayat umedvar ahe*'.
107. Ibid., vol. VI, no. 738.
108. Ibid., vol. VII, no. 709. '*tar aspas ganva lagte astil tyannin payin-kasta sheten karun lagvad karavi.*'
109. *ASS*, vol. V, no. 32, pp. 36–7. '*setachė kasalikes digar mahalchi kule anal ti kule gavachen sivarat ghare va guras bedi badhon rahatil tyas ghardene va vethbegar maf keli ase sukhrup badist badhon lagvad karne kaul ase. . . .*'

CHAPTER 8: RURAL SERVANTS IN THE MAHARASHTRIAN VILLAGE—DEMIURGIC OR JAJMANI SYSTEM?*

I. INTRODUCTION

When we glance over the socio-economic writings since the middle of the last century about the mode of employment of servants in Indian villages, we discern broadly two theories on the subject. First, the old theory which tends to regard servants as employed by the village community as a whole. Following Max Weber's terminology, we shall call such servants demiurgic servants. Second, the new theory is inclined to consider servants as employed by certain specific families (*jajmans* according to W. H. Wiser).

We shall begin by examining some representative writings in line with the old theory. What do they say about the mode of employment of servants in Indian villages?

In *Capital* (first ed. in 1867) Karl Marx has written about the Indian village community and its servants on the basis of two books on India written by two British administrators published in 1810s and 1850s.

> The constitution of these communities varies in different parts of India. In those of the simplest form, the land is tilled in common, and the produce divided among the members. At the same time, spinning and weaving are carried on in each

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> family as subsidiary industries. Side by side with the masses thus occupied with one and the same work, we find the 'chief inhabitant', who is judge, police, and tax-gatherer in one; the book-keeper who keeps the accounts of the tillage and registers everything relating thereto; another official, who prosecutes criminals, protects strangers travelling through, and escorts them to the next village; the boundary man, who guards the boundaries against neighbouring communities; the water-overseer, who distributes the water from the common tanks for irrigation; the Brahmin, who conducts the religious services; the schoolmaster, who on the sand teaches the children reading and writing; the calendar-Brahmin, or astrologer, who makes known the lucky or unlucky days for seed-time and harvest, and for every other kind of agricultural work; a smith and a carpenter, who make and repair all the agricultural implements; the potter, who makes all the pottery of the village; the barber, the washerman, who washes clothes, the silversmith, here and there the poet, who in some communities replaces the silversmith, in others the schoolmaster. *This dozen of individuals is maintained at the expense of the whole community*. If the population increases, a new community is founded, on the pattern of the old one, on unoccupied land. The whole mechanism discloses a systematic division of labour; but a division like that in manufactures is impossible, since the smith and the carpenter, etc., find an unchanging market, and at the most there occur, according to the sizes of the villages, two or three of each, instead of one.[1] (Italics present author's.)

As is well known, Marx wrote:

> The simplicity of the organization for production in these self-sufficing communities that constantly reproduce themselves in the same form, and when accidentally destroyed, spring up again on the spot and with the same name—this simplicity supplies the key to the secret of the unchangeableness of Asiatic societies.[2]

We will not consider here whether what is said here is valid or not. It should however be borne in mind that according to Marx these servants were *maintained at the expense of the whole community*, that they were servants *of* the village.

In his *The Indian Village Community* (1896) Baden-Powell wrote about rural servants in Indian villages as follows:

> But something else was wanted besides officers [headman, accountant, village-watchman, and so on] to make provision for the self-contained life of the 'community'. A village group established perhaps in the forest at some distance from any other village, to say nothing of larger town, would need some purely local means of providing for the simple wants of daily life. And therefore village of this [*raiyatwari* type] and, naturally, of the joint type also, have always solved the difficulty by attracting to themselves a body of resident craftsmen and menials, who are not paid by the job, but *are employed by the village on a fixed remuneration*, sometimes of a bit of rent-free (and perhaps revenue-free) land, sometimes by small payments at harvest, as well as by customary allowances of so many sheaves of corn, millet, etc., or certain measures of grain, and perquisites in kind. Each is also given a housesite in the village, or in some cases, as in Madras, in a group outside it, forming a sort of suburb.[3] (Italics and matter within brackets added.)

He further writes that the custom of paying the artisans and menials by allowances of grain often accompanied by a small grant of land was very ancient and found in every province. The grain allowance was taken out before the division of crop between the state and the cultivators, and the villagers supplied the materials for the work to be done, but did not pay for the labour at the time of work.[4]

Max Weber has also discussed, in his *General Economic History* (1924), the topic of servants in Indian villages. He thinks theirs was a typical case of demiurgic mode of employment. What he says in the following extract is based on his study

of Baden-Powell's works and the decennial censuses:

> Here are settled craftsmen, temple priests (which in contrast with the Brahmins play only a subordinate role), barbers, laundrymen, and all kind of labourers belonging to the village—the village 'establishment'. They hold on a 'demiurgic' basis; that is, they are not paid for their work in detail but stand at the service of the community in return for a share in the land or in the harvest.[5]... They [hand workers] are attached to the village, subject to the disposal of anyone who has need of industrial service. They are essentially village serfs, receiving a share in the products or money payments. This we call 'demiurgical' labour.[6]

Marx thought that 'the economic self-sufficiency' of the Indian village was due to the existence in it of a number of such demiurgic servants, and that this was also the main factor behind 'unchangeableness' of Indian society. Whereas according to Max Weber the 'stability' of Indian society was based upon the caste system combined with 'magical traditionalism'.[7] Thus Marx and Weber had different views regarding the historical role of servants in the society and economy of rural India. However, both thought that servants were maintained by the whole *village*.

Let us now turn our attention to Maharashtrian villages and cite some representative opinions on the rural servants that broadly conform to the old theory.

In his *Administrative System of the Marathas* (1st ed. 1923; 2nd ed. 1925) S. N. Sen discussed the 'village community' during the Maratha period. His views are based on several contemporary Marathi documents as well as Elphinstone's *Report on the Territories Conquered from the Paishwa* (1st ed. 1819):

> As it had its political autonomy, the Maratha village tried to have its industrial autonomy also; and this brought into existence the twelve balutas or the *village artisans*. The logical consequence of the idea and the ideal of industrial autonomy was that the artisans became watan-holders, and expected

that they and their descendants should enjoy a monopoly of their particular trade in the village and their right to such a monopoly in theory as well as in practice was recognized by all.[8] . . . The Balutas or village artisans played an important part in Maratha village. They *enjoyed hereditary monopoly of their trade within the village*, and in the harvest time got a share of grains from *each cultivator*.[9] (Italics present author's.)

He defines the twelve *balutas* or *balutedars* as 'Mahar, Sutar (carpenter), Lohar (blacksmith), Chambhar (leather-worker), Parit (washerman), Kumbhar (potter), Navi (barber), Mang (rope-maker), Kulkarni (village-accountant), Joshi (astrologer), Gurao (Hindu shrine-keeper), and Potdar (money-assayer)', and says that they received some grain called *baluta* at the harvest.[10]

A. S. Altekar, an historian of ancient India, also wrote on this topic. What he says in the following paragraphs is based on several ancient books and the District Gazetteers compiled by British administrators in the early twentieth century.

> All these (smith, carpenter, barber, shoe-maker, potter, washerman) and similar other artisans have been existing in villages from time immemorial, but they exist merely to serve the needs of the community. Hence it is that they are called 'servants of the community' . . .; hence it is that their maintenance was guaranteed by the community; hence it is that they were not, and even now are not, accustomed to migrate from village to village in search of better employment.
>
> The peculiarity of the village occupations is that they are just what are required to make the village community self-contained and self-sufficient. . . .
>
> . . . We find that all over Western India the village community possesses just as many professions as, and no more than what are required to serve the needs of its mainly agricultural population. . . . Let us now see how their members were remunerated for the services which they used to render to the village community. Usually the 'Balute' or the grain share

system was followed, the origin and main features of which will now be discussed.

Under this system a certain grain-share was paid every year by each farmer to all the village artisans at the time of the annual harvest. Payment was not made in cash but in kind; nor was this payment in kind made on each occasion the service was rendered, but annually at the harvest time. And finally we must note that *each farmer has to give a certain grain-share to each of the village servants whether he requires his services or not.*[11] (Italics present author's.)

Altekar adds that the servants usually included in the twelve *balutas* were *chaugula* (assistant village-headman), astrologer, Hindu shrine-keeper, goldsmith, blacksmith, carpenter, potter, leather-worker, rope-maker, barber, washerman, *mahar* (village-watchman) and *tarala* (bearer of burdens and helper of travellers); and that *mulani* (*masjid*-keeper) was also included in case of a village which contained a large Muslim population.[12]

Although there is some difference in the expression of the various opinions quoted above, all agree that servants in an Indian village did serve and were employed by the territorial group called village or more often village community; that they were servants *of* the entire village. On the other hand, as to whether they were *hereditarily* attached to the village, these opinions, except S. N. Sen's, are not clear. However, to describe the status Baden-Powell uses the term 'resident' and Max Weber 'settled'; Altekar also almost negates their mobility: all three however agree on at least one point: the hereditary settlement of the servants in a specific village.

Against this demiurgic theory, the new theory, here conveniently called the *jajmani* theory, asserts that rural servants have been hereditarily employed by certain specific families. Incidentally, those who, sociologists and anthropologists, are in line with the *jajmani* system do not usually care for the old demiurgic theory.

To begin with, W. H. Wiser, an American Christian missionary who stayed in a north Indian village for about five years

from 1925 for his missionary activities, found there complicated economic relationships among the villagers belonging to twenty-four castes, and he examined them in great detail. The result of his research was *The Hindu Jajmani System* (1st ed., 1936), in which he writes as follows:

> While in the village we heard for the first time the terms 'Jajman' and 'Jajmani Haqq'. Gradually we discovered that these terms referred to an established service relationship which was somewhat like the old feudal system, yet unlike it. It contained a mutuality that was lacking in the feudal system. . . .[13]
>
> References to the term 'jajman' or 'jujman' as it is spelled in older literature, are found in court records usually in reference to the employer of a Brahman priest. . . . We have discovered in Karimpur, however, that the term 'jajman' is used for all who have the employer relationship. And the rights involved in the employer–employee relationship are popularly called 'Jajmani haqq'. Just how general this 'Jajmani' relationship is in villages of India we are not prepared to state. . . .[14]
>
> In a Hindu village in north India each individual has a fixed economic and social status, established by his birth in any given caste. If he is born into a carpenter family, he finds himself related by blood to carpenters exclusively. . . . Each carpenter has his own clientele, which has become established through custom, and which continues from generation to generation. Where the village is large enough, the clientele will be limited by the boundaries of the village. If the village is not large, or the members of carpenter families are too numerous to meet the needs of one village, the clientele extends to small neighbouring villages where there are no carpenters in residence. This relationship once established cannot be broken except by the carpenter himself who may choose to sell his right to another carpenter. It is heritable and sometimes transferable. . . .[15]
>
> The carpenter calls his entire clientele his 'jajmani' or 'birt'—

these terms being identical in meaning. *The individual family or head of the family whom the carpenter serves is called the carpenter's 'jajman'*. The 'jajman' speaks of the carpenter's family and all other families that serve him as his 'Kam-wale' or 'Kam karne-wale' [*i.e.* workers], if they are of the serving castes, *i.e.*, Sudras or lower. . . .[16]

. . . Each has his own clientele comprising members of different castes which is his 'jajmani' or 'birt'. This system of interrelatedness in service within the Hindu community is called the Hindu Jajmani system.[17] (Italics added by present writer.)

Unlike the scholars in line with the demiurgic theory, to Wiser the village as a territorial group did not matter much. A village to him was no more than an area, in which lived people belonging to various caste groups, and he was interested in knowing about the economic relations among them, and particularly among different families. These relationships were hereditarily fixed between the patron (*jajman*) and his servants and were transferable by the latter to their respective caste-fellows.

After being ignored for nearly two decades Wiser's work was discovered as it were by the sociologists on India after the Second World War when they developed a vigorous interest in the politico-economic relations in the 'little communities' of India. A large number of works have since been published in line with the *jajmani* theory. Indeed, the term *jajmani* system has become one of the most important technical terms among the sociologists on rural India and it has been applied by them to similar phenomena not only in north India but all over India. However, the regional distribution of such research studies and their depth are quite uneven, and particularly unfortunate for our discussion is the fact that not enough research has been done on the Deccan or Maharashtra to throw much light on this aspect of rural servants.

T. O. Beidelman, who studied a large number of post-War (or post-Independence) works on rural India, has defined the

jajmani system as follows: 'The jajmani system is a feudalistic system of prescribed, hereditary obligations of payment and of occupational and ceremonial duties between two or more specific families of different castes in the same locality.'[19]

Unlike many other sociologists who simply ignore the old theory on rural servants Beidelman says that 'before Wiser the jajmani system had been mentioned in terms of "village menials", "village servants", "village artisans", kamins, etc.'[20] Oscar Lewis also writes in the Foreword to Wiser's book: 'It [the concept of *jajmani* system] provides us with a framework for a better understanding of much discrete data which earlier observers, such as Russel, Crooke, Baden-Powell, Ibbetson and Darling, described under the heading "village menials", "village servants", artisans, jajmans, kamins, etc.'[21] They simply take it for granted that the servants employed and maintained by the village community as described by the old theory were, in fact, servants of specific families belonging to the dominant castes in the locality under the *jajmani* system.

Many instances of the servants–patron relationship can no doubt be found in both north and south India that conform to the concept of *jajmani* system.[22] At the same time there are some others who do not support the concept. For example, M. N. Srinivas, writing on a Mysore village, says:

> But this tendency toward stability [of service relationship between patron and his servants] does not mean that continued unsatisfactory behavior on either side will be tolerated. After protesting to the village elders, the aggrieved party will break off the old relationship and form a new relationship with another. Shifting relationship may ultimately make one Smith or Potter more popular and therefore richer than others. Such shifting of relationship is also partly responsible for the rivalry which exists between members of the same non-agricultural caste in a village. . . .[23]

Here *hereditary* service relationship does not mean much.[24] Moreover, not all servants were employed by specific families. In the same village,

of the thirty Untouchable families, fifteen are cultivators, and fifteen live by coolie work. Some of the cultivators are *cakaras*, or hereditary *village servants*, whose duty it is to assist the headman and accountant in the collection of land tax. . . .[25] (Italics of English words present writer's.)

Then discussing some disputes between the Camars and the Jats in a north Indian village, Oscar Lewis writes:

> There were three other court cases between the Camars and Jats from 1930 to 1947. In one case the Jats asked the Camars to assign a man each day to keep a day watch to guard Jat harvest against animals and thieves. When the Camars refused, the Jats took the case to court. A compromise was reached in which the Camars agreed to a night watch rather than a day watch. The Camars interpreted this as a victory and they became more aggressive. . . .[26]
>
> In this case both the Jats and the Chamars of the village behaved as a group to one another, and a night watch was agreed on not between a Jat family and a Chamar family but between all the Jats as a group and all the Chamars as a group. Here the *jajmani* relation as a relation between specific families is not visible.

Although there are some sociologists who try to modify, or even more, delimit, the concept of *jajmani* system,[27] it is nevertheless regarded by the modern sociologists on rural India as one of the major frameworks for research.

Of the two theories discussed here, the old one, it should be noted, is insufficiently backed by empirical evidences. It is primarily based on the writings by some British administrators, who may simply have taken the servants of specific families for the servants of the whole village. On the other hand, works of modern sociologists seem to lack a historical perspective. They tend to regard the phenomena that appear to be old at the time of their field work as *traditional*, with the implication that they have continued since time immemorial. However what

are thus taken to be 'traditional' systems and institutions, may actually have developed in the very recent past.

In the following sections of this article I will try to examine, on the basis of some thirty contemporary records written in Marathi, this question of the mode and nature of employment of servants in the eighteenth century Maharashtrian villages. And I will try to be as objective as possible. I will first discuss a number of questions about those servants who are collectively called in our records twelve *balutas*: Were they servants of the entire village or of a few specific families in the village? Was the sphere of their service hereditary (and transferable) or temporary? How were they paid, and how was their service-sphere divided when necessary? Secondly, I will take up the mode of employment of priests as representing the typically *jajmani* system.

Due to the paucity of materials what I have to say cannot but be tentative.

II. THE TWELVE BALUTA-SERVANTS (BARA BALUTE)

Servants in Maharashtrian villages are sometimes classified into two categories: 'twelve *balutas*' and 'twelve *alutas*'. A few words of explanation here about these two categories should be in order. First, there are some differences of opinion among modern scholars as regards the components of the twelve. As already mentioned, Sen enumerates under twelve *balutas*: carpenter, blacksmith, potter, leather-worker, rope-maker, barber, washerman, village-accountant, astrologer, Hindu shrine-keeper, money-assayer, and *mahar* (untouchable caste of village watchman and other menial works). As money-assaying used to be done by the goldsmith (*sonar*), the money-assayer could be put as goldsmith. On the other hand, Altekar removes the village-accountant from the list and adds assistant village-headman, *masjid*-keeper, and *tarala* (bearer of burdens and helper to travellers) as already mentioned. According to H. H. Wilson, the village-headman, village-accountant and assistant village-headman are not usually included in the *balutas* and he quotes

J. Grant-Duff who excludes the village accountant and money-assayer (or goldsmith) from and adds bard (*bhatt*) and *masjid*-keeper[28] to Sen's list of twelve *balutas*. Against this the twelve *balutas* as shown in a record of 1799 from Saswad region contain goldsmith but leave out bard.[29] In short, the following ten were almost regularly included: carpenter, blacksmith, potter, leather-worker, rope-maker, barber, washerman, astrologer, Hindu shrine-keeper, and Mahar. In addition to the above ten, gold-smith, bard, *masjid*-keeper and bearer of burdens were also often included.

Second, the list of 'twelve *alutas*' is also slightly different according to different scholars. For instance, Grant-Duff includes goldsmith, Lingayat priest (*jangam*), tailor (*shinpi*), water-carrier (*koli*), bearer of burdens (*tarala*), gardener (*mali*), drum-beater (*dauryagosavi*), vocalist (*ghadshi*), musician (*gondali*), watchman (*ramoshi* or *bhil*), oil-presser (*teli*), and betel leaves-seller (*tamboli*).[30] Wilson's list has bard in place of goldsmith.[31] In other words, goldsmith, bard and the bearer of burdens were sometimes included in the twelve *balutas* as mentioned before and sometimes in the twelve *alutas*.

Third, whereas the terms '*balutas*' and 'twelve *balutas*' frequently occur in the eighteenth century Marathi records, so far as I know '*alutas*' and 'twelve *alutas*' are not mentioned in them, although the names of separate occupations shown above as to be included in *alutas* are. This suggests that the terms '*alutas*' and 'twelve *alutas*' were scarcely used in Maharashtra during the pre-British period. It is said, and there may be some truth in it, that the term *aluta* was formed alliteratively with *baluta* in extension of the application of that word,[32] and so unlike the *balutas* the so-called *alutas* were not regularly found in every village but only occasionally in some villages;[33] they were certainly not as indispensable as the *balutas* for the daily life of the villagers. This is also indicated by the fact that scholars like Sen and Altekar make no mention of *alutas*. I will not further discuss them in this article.

And fourth, a few words about the castes of *balutas* The astro-loger and bard were as a rule *brahmins*. The village-accountant,

whether regarded as a *baluta* or not, was also a *brahmin* in Maharashtra. A *brahmin* family sometimes performed these different functions. The carpenter and the blacksmith were usually different castes, but in some villages a carpenter of the carpenter caste was engaged to do the jobs of a blacksmith, and *vice versa*.[34] Except for such cases the *balutas* as a rule belonged to different occupational castes.

1. Watan-*holding* Balutas *and Stranger* (Upari) Balutas

Most scholars believe that the nature of service each rural servant was required to render was hereditarily fixed and monopolistic. Sen says so expressly, and Baden-Powell, Max Weber, and Altekar also suggest as much. Many modern sociologists also as it were take it for granted. R. V. Oturkar has this to say: 'One would be led to think that any conceivable profession under the sun could possibly be crystallized into a Watan, so deep was the idea rooted in the mentality of the people (during the eighteenth century).'[35]

But so far as the *baluta*-servants in the eighteenth century Maharashtra were concerned, this view does not appear to me to be correct. There was a clear distinction between *watandar* (or *mirasdar*) *balutas* and *upari balutas*. Both the words—*watan* and *miras*—are of Arabic origin; the former ordinarily means 'native country' or 'home', and the latter 'patrimony' or 'inheritance'. In our records these two words are used interchangeably; for the sake of convenience, we will use only *watan*. *Upari* is an indigenous word used in Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati and Marathi; it means 'new comer', 'stranger' or 'extra'.[36] Regarding this distinction we shall show some instances.

A very lengthy record of the year 1765 reveals the detailed process and result of a dispute over the goldsmithery *watan* (*sonarkiche vatan*) of a village named Lonikhurd in Sangamner region about 30 kilometres north-north east of Poona. The dispute was between Lakshman, a goldsmith of Village Lonibudruk and Village Hasanapur, and Sadashiv, a goldsmith of

Village Lonikhurd. Lakshman asserted that when the Village Loni was divided into three villages as mentioned above, his ancestors held the goldsmithery *watan* of these villages; after the death of his great-grandfather, his great-grandmother was remarried to a goldsmith residing in another village. She took her son, a small boy by her first marriage (Lakshman's grandfather), to her second husband's village, leaving the goldsmithery of the three villages to be looked after by a relative. After some time Sadashiv's grandfather came to Village Lonikhurd and started a goldsmithery there. The relative, entrusted to look after the old goldsmithery, informed of the situation to Lakshman's grandfather who sent his two sons (one of whom was Lakshman's father) to their ancestral villages. They (Lakshman's father and uncle) settled down in Village Lonibudruk and started the goldsmithery in Village Lonibudruk and Village Hasanapur, and demanded of Sadashiv's grandfather and father to restore the goldsmithery *watan* at Village Lonikhurd to them. Sadashiv's grandfather and father refused the demand, maintaining, that the goldsmithery *watan* was theirs, although the document given them by the villagers to that effect had been lost. The case was referred to the local governor who summoned the disputants, as well as the village officers and *balutas* of the three villages as witnesses before him. All the witnesses submitted their statements one after another, supporting the contention that the goldsmithery *watan* of Village Lonikhurd was Lakshman's and that Sadashiv and his ancestors were 'new strangers' (*nava upari*) even though they worked in the village for three generations as goldsmith and enjoyed during the period the goldsmith's remuneration (*sonarkichen baluten*). On the basis of these evidences, Sadashiv admitted his defeat, gave his defeat letter (*yajitpatra*) to Lakshman in front of the governor and left the village with his family.[37]

This clear distinction of status between the *watan*-holder and the stranger held good with all kinds of rural services. For instance, a lengthy record of the year 1763 shows a dispute over the *watan* of blacksmithery of a village named Koradh in the Junnar province. Several families of carpenters related to

one another and a family of blacksmiths lived in this village. The carpenters claimed that not only the carpentry *watan* but also the blacksmithery *watan* of the village belonged to them, for the restoration of which they appealed to the local governor. The governor summoned both the disputants and twenty-five villagers including a headman to a justice assembly. The plaintiffs (carpenters) asserted in that assembly that the blacksmithery *watan* of the village was actually theirs, for one of them had been engaged in blacksmithery. This 'carpenter blacksmith' (*sutar lohar*) was one day summoned to the local office, beaten and fined because he had lost an axe given him for repair. The villager who gave the axe had appealed to the local officer. The 'carpenter blacksmith' was angry and very unhappy at that treatment, gave up the blacksmithery and shifted to a nearby town. The villagers (*ganvakari*) visited him once or twice at his new town and tried to presuade him to get back but he refused to do so because, as he said, he had lost face. The villagers then brought another blacksmith (the defendant) from some other village and got him to work the blacksmithery of the village. The carpenters were opposed to this arrangement, so the villagers asked them to do the blacksmithery themselves and pay the new blacksmith some money for he had already worked for some time. The blacksmith did not agree to the proposal.[38] He maintained that the blacksmithery *watan* of the village had belonged to his family till his grandfather's time. His father in his infancy left the village due to a famine and settled down in the other village where he (the defendant) was later born. After his father's death, when he was fifteen years old, the officers (*karbhari*) of the Koradh Village came to know of his where-abouts and took him back to the village saying that he was the *watandar*; and since then he had been engaged in the black-smithery of the village. Therefore, the blacksmith argued, the *watan* was his.[39] The statements the twenty-five villagers made were of two classes. One group of fifteen, confirming the assertion of the plaintiffs, stated that as the 'carpenter blacksmith' had shifted to the town and did not return to the village, the 'headman and other officers of the village brought a stranger

blacksmith named Satva (Satva Loher *upari*, defendant) from another village . . . and got him to do the blacksmithery. . . . Since then he has been doing the blacksmithery and getting the *balute*-remuneration. He also stamps the seal of blacksmith upon the documents when they are prepared in the storehouse in the village. But this blacksmith is not the *watandar*; neither his grandfather nor his father lived in the village. Nor was he brought to the village as *watandar*. . . . Blacksmith Satva has no *watan's* house (*watanacha vada*) in the village; he lives in the goldsmith's.'[40] The other group of ten villagers, on the other hand, stated that they did not know who had been the original blacksmith of the village, whether Blacksmith Satva was *watandar* or whether the blacksmithery of the village belonged to carpenters, and 'so far as we see, Blacksmith Satva is doing blacksmithery, and carpenters carpentry. The blacksmith receives the *baluta*-remuneration for blacksmithery, and Blacksmith Satva stamps the seal upon the documents as blacksmith, and carpenters the seal of carpentry.' They further stated that they did not know whether Satva was brought to the village 'as *watandar* or *watanless* (*gairvatani*)'.[41] As the statements were thus divided, the local governor refrained from giving any decision and entrusted the dispute for settlement to a *panchayat* composed of the hereditary officers (*deshmukh* and *deshpande*) of the region and the headmen of the nearby villages. The *panchayat* considered the villagers' statements and decided, 'there is no evidence in the statements to show that Blacksmith Satva is a *watandar* blacksmith, nor is any evidence available to prove that his father, grandfather or great-grandfather (lived in the village). . . . He has simply practised (blacksmithery) as a stranger (*uparipana*). He has received the *baluta*-remuneration for doing blacksmithery, and it is because of this that he stamps the seal (of blacksmithery) upon documents. . . . This blacksmith has enjoyed (the benefits from blacksmithery) for only thirty or thirty-two years. He has nothing to do with the *watan*. On the other hand, it is proved that the carpenters' uncle (carpenter blacksmith), grandfather and great-grandfather lived (in the village) for three generations. And some of the villagers

(*pandhari*) state that the blacksmith who left the village in disappointment was a carpenter (by caste). Then the carpenters (plaintiffs) have arrived at the blacksmithery *watan*. . . .'[42]

Thus the plaintiffs won the case, and the defendant admitted his defeat and wrote a document to that effect to the former.[43]

As already mentioned, sometimes the same family performed both carpentry and blacksmithery. In this case, we find a clear distinction between one who rendered certain service as his *watan* (patrimony) and another who did the same but *without the watan* (*gairvatani*), as *upari*.

Two more instances to highlight this point. When there was no hereditary accountant (*kulkarni*) in a village in Paithan region, the headmen of the village jointly sold for Rs 150 the *watan* of accountancy of the village and a housesite to an accountant-cum-astrologer of a nearby village and gave him a *miraspatra* in which it was stated, 'there was no old *watandar* accountant in our village. A stranger (*upari*) came and did the work (of accountant).'[44] Again, when two barbers disputed over the *watan* of hairdressing in a village in Navase region, one of the disputants stated in the justice assembly, 'Headmen of the village appointed my grandfather for working for this village, which we have since been doing. But this is not our *watan*.'[45]

In short, not all *baluta*-servants held hereditary monopoly (*watandar*) over the services they rendered. There was a distinction between those who held it and those who did not (the *uparis*). Then there is the question of who employed them—the village itself as a territorial whole or some specific families separately? We shall begin with the examination of the extent of the sphere of their service and proceed to the discussion of the mode of their remunèration.

2. *Service-sphere of the* Baluta-*Servants*

Among our records none indicates that *baluta*-servants in Maharashtrian villages were employed by separate families. Rather all of them show that they were servants of the village as a whole. In the record on the goldsmithery *watan* referred to

above, the presiding local governor, the disputants and the witnesses all use such phrases as 'goldsmithery of the village' (*ganvachi sonarki*), 'work of goldsmithery of the village' (*ganvachi sonarkichen kamkaj*), 'service to the village' (*ganvachi chakri*), 'work for the village' (*dehayachen kamkaj, ganvache kamkaj*), '*watan* of the village' (*ganvachen vatan*), and 'goldsmithery *watan* of the village' (*dehaimajkurchen sonarkichen vatan*).[46] A village headman says in his statement that when Goldsmith Shidu came from Village Vedegavhan, 'all the villagers (*ganvakari samast*) appointed him to work for the village.'[47] The headman of Lonibudruk Village also uses the phrase 'our goldsmith' (*aple sonar*),[48] and the headman of Hasanpur Village says, 'it is true that Goldsmith Lakshman is our old *mirasdar* brother bound through *watan*' (Lakshman Sonar *apla puratan mirasdar vatan bhau khare ahe*).[49] This does not of course mean that the goldsmith was specially employed by the families of headmen. The headmen made such statements in their capacity as the representatives of their villages, for the Hasanpur headman immediately after said, 'he was made to do the work of goldsmithery of our village'.[50] The first headman also made mention of 'work of *watan* of goldsmithery of the village'.[51]

In the record on the dispute over blacksmithery referred to above, phrases such as the following are often used: '*watan* of blacksmithery of the above village' (*mauje majkurchen loharkichen vatan*),[52] and '*watans* of carpentry and blacksmithery of the above village' (*mauje majkurchen sutarkichen va loharkichen vatan*).[53] The disputants agreed to 'abide by the decision of the the villagers, if (the local governor) make them all assemble (*samakul pandhar*) and asks them to submit their statements after putting the symbol of truth (*belbhandar*, namely leaves of Bel-tree and turmeric powder that are on a deity) on their forehead.'[54] The governor accordingly 'collected the villagers (*pandhar*), . . . summoned them singly one by one and asked each to state his evidence on the *watan* of blacksmithery'.[55] Although the term 'all villagers' should not be understood literally, for the persons collected were only twenty-five in

number, comprising headmen, peasants and various servants,[56] yet there is no doubt that the people concerned were quite conscious of the fact that the carpenter and the blacksmith were 'of the village,' and that therefore the dispute over their service-sphere was to be decided by the evidences of all the villagers.

When another dispute took place between a carpenter and a blacksmith over the blacksmithery *watan* of some other village (*mauje majkurche loharpanachya vatan*), 'all the villagers, landholders, and twelve *balutas*' were collected in front of the village-shrine and made to submit their evidences. In this case, only twenty-one persons were collected; however since the concerned person was 'the blacksmith of the village' 'all the villagers' were required to decide the dispute.[57] In another record about a barber's case in a village in Navase region, the following phrases occur: '*watan* of hairdressing of the above village' (*mauje majkurche nhavipanache vatan*) and 'work for the village' (*ganvachen kam, ganvachen kamkaj*).[58]

Regarding the untouchables such as *mahars* and *mangs* (rope-makers), the following examples may be cited. In 1738 the *deshmukh* and the *deshpande* of Lalagun Buddh Panchgau region enquired into the duties and remunerations of the *mahars vis-à-vis* the village-headmen in their region and reported what they found to their counterparts of Saswad region. This report contains seventeen items. These will be listed later when the modes of remuneration of *baluta*-servants are discussed. However, the first item is: '*Mahars* should work for twenty-four hours (per month?) during twelve months in order to deepen the reservoir (of the village).' The second item is: 'In case there are other *mahars* they should work for the village in accordance with the order of the village-headman.'[59] In a record concerning a dispute over the remuneration between *mahars* and *mangs* in Garad Village near Poona in 1810 (discussed later), a *mahar* states, 'then the *mangs* appealed to the villagers (*pandhari*). And so the villagers summoned me and said. . . .'[60]

These examples suggest that the *baluta*-servants did not

serve any specific families but the entire village.

It should be borne in mind, however, that the village in the eighteenth century Maharashtra was nothing like an agrarian commune based on the common ownership of land and other property among the peasants. There was a class division, so to say, such as the *mirasdars* (landholders) and the *uparis* (stranger peasants or tenants), and the peasants (along with servants) lived in the inhabited area (*pandhari*) of the village as separate families. Their daily life of production and consumption was carried on a family basis.[61] Each *baluta*-servant served some specific families in the village. For instance, in the dispute over the blacksmithery between carpenters and the blacksmith referred to above, it was said: 'Carpenter Kashi, uncle of Darkoji, was engaged in blacksmithery. Sabaji Kuchila of the above village placed his axe with Kashi for repair, which disappeared from him.'[62] It is not clear from this record whether Kuchila was a peasant or an artisan. At any rate it shows that it was the individual villagers belonging to different families that enjoyed the service of the *baluta* blacksmith. But, at the same time, this blacksmith was not specifically employed by the Kuchila family, for when he lost the axe of Kuchila, he was complained of by the latter to the local governor, was beaten and fined by this, got angry and disappointed, and shifted to a near-by town, 'villagers (*ganvakari*) visited him once or twice at his new town and tried to persuade him to get back, but he refused to do so because, as he said, he had lost face. The villagers (*ganvakari*) then brought another blacksmith . . . and got him to work the blacksmithery of the village.'[63] In other words, those who went to the town to bring back the blacksmith or brought another from somewhere else were not the Kuchilas but the villagers conceived as an aggregate whole. In short the sphere of service of the *baluta*-servant was a village as a territorial group. He offered his service to individual villagers belonging to the village irrespective of their family affiliation.

In order to ascertain this point further we shall examine next the kinds and modes of remuneration for the *baluta*-servants.

3. *Remuneration for* Baluta-*Servants*

It seems that there were broadly three kinds of remuneration for *baluta*-servants. One was in kind or in cash called *baluta*. We shall call it *baluta*-remuneration. The second was small additional remunerations in kind or in cash variously called *hakk* (rights), *lavajima* (perquisites) or *manpan* (privileges), which we will refer to as perquisites. The third was revenue-free *inam* land often held by some of the *baluta*-servants. We will first take up the discussion of the *baluta*-remuneration.

Not only the *watan*-holding servants but also those who held no *watan* (the *uparis*) were entitled to the *baluta*-remuneration as long as they offered specific service to the village. This is clear from the fact that Goldsmith Sadashiv, who was finally judged to be an *upari* in the dispute over goldsmithery as referred to above, is repeatedly stated to have received *baluta*-remuneration for goldsmithery for doing the work of the village. In another dispute over the blacksmithery referred to above, the village-headmen and the villagers concerned said about Blacksmith Satva, finally judged to be an *upari*, as follows: '. . . since then, he has been doing the work of blacksmithery and getting the *baluta*-remuneration. . . . This blacksmith is, however, not *watan*-holder.'[64] And again 'so far as we see, Blacksmith Satva is doing blacksmithery, and carpenters carpentry. *Baluta*-remuneration for blacksmithery is received by the blacksmith.'[65]

On the other hand, it seems that even the *watan*-holding servant was not entitled to *baluta*-remuneration if he was absent from the village for a long time. In the above two examples, neither the *watan*-holding goldsmith nor the carpenters holding the blacksmithery *watan* demanded the *baluta*-remuneration for the period when they were absent. Moreover, there is a record in which the total remuneration in cash of twelve *baluta*-servants of a village in Saswad region is shown. The total amount was Rs 70. '*Mahars* are not serving on their *watan*. Therefore deduct Rs 10 (amount due to Mahars). The rest is Rs 60.'[66]

There were probably at least three different modes of paying *baluta*-remuneration. These may have corresponded with the

three different methods of collecting land revenue by the state.

The first mode corresponds with the *batai* system of revenue collection in which a certain proportion of the actual agricultural products of the village was collected. A record of 1774 recollects the state of affairs of Junnar region under the Mughal rule perhaps in the seventeenth century. It states, 'Formerly when the *batai* system of the village was practised under the Mughal rule, all the products of the village were collected in one place, and after weighing the products by the hands of weigher, *baluta*-remuneration was paid.'[67] In other words, the headman, responsible for the collection of revenue, made each peasant bring his products to a certain place in the village, and let him pay certain amount of them to each *baluta*-servant, and then a fixed proportion of the rest was collected as revenue.

The second mode seems to correspond with the method of revenue collection where the amount of revenue from each peasant family was prefixed in kind or in cash, and peasants were not required to bring the entire produce to one place. In a record from Saswad region supposed to have been written before 1746, a village-headman complains to the *deshpande* of the region of the misbehaviour committed by the accountant-astrologer of his village as follows:

> *Baluta*-remuneration for astrologer used to be paid after (the headman) inspected the peasants (*kula*) and the fields, and according to the state of crops. He (astrologer) also used to receive (it). At present, however, the *kusajipant* (astrologer) not only wrongfully takes the cotton-cloth for marriage go-between (due to the barber?) by force, he also sends his female slave and ruffians (? *rangadya*) along with a horse to each field for *baluta*-remuneration, and the female slave makes bundles as she pleases of the produce, gets the peasants (*setkari*) to pile them up on the horse and carries them back (*to* the house of the astrologer).... When I went to reprimand the *kusajipant* about this, he came out with a stick to beat me with. (He) has begun to behave rudely in this way. He is the astrologer-accountant and I am the headman. How could I endure his

rudeness? . . . 5 *partanes* of land [perhaps 20 to 25 *bighas*] were in possession (of the astrologer-accountant) as Brahmin land (*brahmanatike*) since a long time. Now, however, (he) is 'eating' 10 *partanes* by force: (he) has taken the other 5 *partanes* out of the land of peasants (*kunbi*), who are forced to labour (*shrami*) (by him).[68]

In this instance, the correspondence with the revenue system is not clearly stated. At any rate this record shows that the normal procedure in this village was for the headman to inspect the state of crops, perhaps at each harvest, and to get each peasant to pay a part of his produce to each of the *baluta*-servants.

The third mode was to pay a certain amount of money to *baluta*-servants. For instance; a record of 1799 from Saswad region states as follows:

> Year 1200 in Shuhur era (A.D. 1799) Details of the remuneration for *baluta*-servants per year in rupees.

1st class (*kas thorli*)		2nd class (*kas madhil*)		3rd class (*dhakti kas*)		
carpenter	10	potter	5	astrologer	2.5	
leather-worker	10	barber	5	shrine-keeper	2.5	
rope-maker	10	washer-man	5	goldsmith	2.5	
Mahar	10	black-smith	5	Masjid-keeper	2.5	
Total	40	Total	20	Total	10	Grand total 70

> Of them *mahars* are not serving on their *watan*. Therefore deduct Rs 10. The rest is Rs 60.[69]

The above record does not show the name of the village. Nor is it clear whether the sum was paid by each peasant family or by all the peasant families together. The second possibility is

more likely to be true. At any rate the record indicates that *baluta*-remuneration was sometimes paid in cash, perhaps when the revenue of the village as a whole was fixed at a certain amount of money.

In short, there is hardly any doubt that there were at least three modes of *baluta*-remuneration, and that it was borne by the peasants as a whole.

The second kind of payment is here called 'perquisites', and the third is a small plot of *inam* land. Some examples of these payments are given below.

In a record of 1740 an astrologer of Khed region is stated to have held the following two rights (*hakk*) in addition to '*baluta*-remuneration equal to that of a Hindu shrine-keeper's (*balute guravabarobar*)': 1. A share of the offerings to the village-shrine equal to other *baluta*-servants (*devali prasad bhar balutiyabarobar*); 2. *Inam* land of 25 *bighas* (about 8 hectares) producing the grain of 12.5 *mans* (probably about 157 kilograms).[70]

As already referred to, the *deshmukh* and the *deshpande* of Lalagun Buddh Panchgau region enquired into the following seventeen items of rights and duties of the village-headman and the *mahars* in the year 1738.

1. *Mahars* should work for twenty-four hours (per month?) during twelve months in order to deepen the reservoir (of the village).
2. In case there are other *mahars* they should work for the village in accordance with the order of the village-headman.

Items (of remunerations) for *mahars* are to go on as follows:

3. They should 'eat' *harati* land [a kind of *inam* land] and do miscellaneous jobs for the village-headman.
4. They should 'eat' *Maharik* land [a kind of *inam* land], and do miscellaneous jobs for government.
5. The headman (*mhetare*) of *mahars* should take the *baluta*-remuneration (*baite* = *balute*)[71] for useless fellows

(? *gandu gudadya*). Excepting eight *mahars* the rest is his. (The meaning of this item is not clear.)

6. Grains left in the threshing ground.
7. *Baluta*-remuneration for *mahars*.
8. People say that *mahars* hold fifty-two rights besides those shown above. Total six items
9. Besides the above items, if there are fallen trees (*padjhad*) in the residential area of the village, they are *mahars*.
10. Village-headman should give a piece of cloth to the messenger *mahar* (*labecha mahar*) when (the latter) wishes.
11. *Mahar* should offer a bundle of firewood (to village-headman) on each festival day (*sana*), and then ask for food.
12. (*Mahars*) should remove the skin of (dead) cattle of the headman's, accountant's and assistant headman's families, and give it to its respective owner. Besides, the skin of the plough ox of important families of the village (*pandha-richi khot matkhasar kulavavada*) should be given to its owner.
13. The headman responsible for the cultivation (? *nangare patil*) should take the meat of the female buffalo-calf dedicated on the festival of goddess Lakshmi.
14. On the Holi festival of village (*ganviche Holi*) (the headman) should give to *mahars* a half of coconut-shell, betel-leaves (*pansupari*) and cigars in order to make *mahars* bring the fire for Holi.
15. Offerings called *naivedya* at the Holi of the village should be taken by the water-carrier (*koli*) and vocalist (*ghadshi*), and *mahar* should receive in his open hands as much as the water-carrier may give.
16. When a merchant family (*vaniyache birad*) throw copper coins (? *votal dam*) on the ground they should be given to him (*mahar*). (Meaning is not clear.)
17. The headman should take 4 *rukas* (small amount of money) from each family (? *dar biradas*), and the watch-

man *mahar* (*mahar rakhan*) 2 *rukas* from each family (*? dar biradas*); total 6 *rukas*. (Meaning is not quite clear).[72]

In Village Pargao near Poona there was a custom that the headman should give to the leather-workers of the village five items (details not shown) out of the offerings (*naivedya*) dedicated to the village-shrine at the Holi festival.[73]

In a record of 1776, *mahars* of villages in Parner region to the west of Ahmadnagar are stated to have enjoyed the following rights (*hakk*):

1. When cattle die in the village *mahars* should have their skins excepting those of the plough oxen.
2. On the Dasahara festival while the rope-makers receive a bowl of food from each family (*gharoghar*) (in the village), *mahars* are entitled to five kinds of offerings (*panch naivedya*) (dedicated to village-shrine) as well as five *pais* of cash.
3. An ox offered to god (*polyache bailacha naivedya*) (on festivals) is given to *mahars*.
4. When cattle die in the house of rope-makers they are also given to *mahars*.
5. On the Dasahara festival, the pot of sweets (*pedhyachi ghagar*) hung from the neck of a male buffalo going round the village should be given to the *mahars* along with the male buffalo.
6. Offerings dedicated to the village-shrine in order to avoid cholera epidemics are given to *mahars*.[74]

In short, whereas the *baluta*-remuneration was paid by the peasants in kind or sometimes in cash, the perquisites, variously called *hakk*, *manpan* and by some other terms, were given to servants by all the villagers, including not only peasants but also village officers, merchants and village servants in the form of offerings to village-shrine or on various other occasions and under various pretexts. There were complicated customary rules in the village and region as to which servant was to receive what

kind of perquisites, how much, when and where.

It is, however, not clear due to the paucity of data whether an *upari* servant who did not hold his service-sphere as *watan* but worked in the village for an uncertain period of time enjoyed the same perquisites as did a *watan*-holding servant so long as he served in the village, or there was any discrimination between them in this regard.

On the other hand, as *inam* land was hereditarily enjoyed in principle,[75] it may be safely presumed that only the *watan*-holding *baluta*-servants could have such an *inam* land.

At any rate, it may be concluded that the twelve *baluta*-servants were maintained and supported by the village as a territorial whole.

The question that immediately occurs to one is: Perhaps so long as only one family of a serving caste lived in a village, that family would be treated as the 'servants of the village', but when several families of the same serving caste lived in the village, those families would probably divide the villagers among themselves for rendering their specific service, and thus each of these families was likely to be then taken as 'servants of those specific families' in the village to whom the serving families were attached. In order to answer this question, we will turn to the mode of dividing the *watan* of *baluta*-servants.

4. *Division, Transfer and Sale of* Baluta-Watan

The *baluta-watan* was heritable or hereditary on the patrilineal line as is clear from several examples given above. Moreover, the *watan* could be divided, transferred or sold by its holder. Regarding the sale, an example is shown in the following statement made by Goldsmith Sadashiv in the justice-assembly presided over by the local governor: 'Goldsmith Lakshman told me, "as I will give you Rs 200, give me the *watan*".'[76] This means that the sale of *watan* among the same professional group (caste) was by no means extraordinary.

However, any record showing details of the mode of division, transfer and sale of *watan* is rather rare. Yet there is a *watan*

certificate (*watanpatra*) issued by King Shahu's government to two Brahmin brothers surnamed Chandrachud, half accountant and half astrologer (*ninme kulkarni* va *jyotishi*) of Village Nimbgaon Nagana, Khed region, Junnar province, dated 17 October 1740. The same is translated:

(Date, names of addressees, their professions etc.) You came to the camp of Satara and requested His Majesty (*swami*) as follows:

Hmalsabai, widow of Malhar Raghunath Atre of Atri clan (*gotra*), accountant and astrologer of the above village, has no son (*putrasantan*). (She) had to repay a debt incurred in connection with the *watans* as well as for living (*yogakshem*), and (as she was) getting old, (she) wanted to do some offering (*dana dharma*). Therefore (she) offered half the *watans* (*ninme vatan*) to her son-in-law (*janvai*), Lakshman Govind surnamed Tallu, and coming to our house, sold (*vikat dilhen*) to us for Rs 2,000 the other half of the *watans* of accountancy and astrology above mentioned, along with the customary remunerations (*kanukayade*) and (her) house of her own accord (*aple khush rajavandinen*). And (she) gave (us) the sales-deed (*khare-dikhat*) and certificate of the local assembly (*gotacha mahajar*). (We) showed them to Peshwa Bajirao and got him to grant a certificate (of the Peshwa government). Your Majesty, please take them into account, grant a *watan* certificate and make us carry it on hereditarily.

(You) petitioned like this, and submitted the sales-deed, the certificate of local assembly, and the certificate of the Peshwa to King's presence.

Sales-deed. I, Hmalsabai, widow of Malhar Raghunath Atre of Atri clan, accountant and astrologer (*kulkarni va jyotishi ashtadhikari*) of Village Nimbgaon Nagana, Khed region of Junnar province, write and hand over the following sales-deed to Mr Baji Eshwant and Mr Gangadhar Eshwant surnamed Chandrachud, working under the *deshpande* of Junnar province, on the first day of the second half of the seventh month (*ashvin vadya*), the year 1656 named *anand*

in Shaka era, the year 1135 in Suhur era, and the year 1144 (in Fasli era; A.D. 1734).

Accountancy (*kulkarna*) and astrologership (*jyotishpana*) of the above village are (our) old *watans*. I have, however, neither son nor anyone of kindred (to succeed to the *watans*). I have lived alone. There has been no increase of kindred (*vanshavriddh*) to carry on the family occupation (*vritti*) and service to the village (*pandharichi seva*). (I) have lost hope, am getting old, want to come to the end of my life by doing some offering, and had to repay a debt incurred for my living and family occupation. For these reasons, I offered to my son-in-law named . . . half the *watans*, along with (my) house and customary remunerations, out of the accountancy and astrologership of the above village, which had been my old *watans*. And I have come to your house, bowed my head before you, sold to you the other half of the *watans*, including house and customary remunerations, out of the *watans* of accountancy and astrologership above mentioned, along with the seniority (*vadilpana*), and accepted Rs 2,000 from you. The right half of the house is given to you, and the left half to Lakshman Govind (my son-in-law). Reside in the right (half), and live happily generation after generation.

The payment (*mushahira*) for accountancy is 60 *takes* or Rs 24 and three *khandis* of grains (perhaps about 750 kilograms) (probably per year). Take a half of them and give the other half to Lakshman Govind, and enjoy hereditarily (*ninme tuhmin ghenen va ninme Lakshman Govind yansi deun vanshparanparenen anabhavun rahanen*). (Besides) privileges (*man*) for accountancy and astrologership are as follows:

Privileges for accountancy (shown to the left and right sides on the same page).

(Seven items to the left side)

1. The turban granted by the government should be received next to the headman.
2. The oil from the oil-presser (*teli*) should be received from each shop daily per 9 *tanks* (a *tank* being from 3 to 13 grams in different localities).

3. A pair of shoes from leather-worker per year.
4. Water from water-carriers (*koli*) should be received next to the headman.
5. A bundle of firewood (from *mahars*?) on festival days (*sana*).
6. The oil for ink and the cloth for covering documents are to be taken from the village (fund).
7. Betel leaves to be taken from betel leaves-seller should be received at half the amount taken by the headman.

Total seven items

(Six items to the right side)

1. On the Dewali and Dasahara festivals performance of music (by musicians at the door) is to be done next to the headman.
2. The share (*seva*) to be taken from gardeners should be received next to the headman.
3. The shares (*utpann*) to be taken as the right from (the offerings dedicated to) the shrine of the god Maltand (an incarnation of Shiva) as follows.
   a. (A cash of) two and half *takes* on the monthly full moon festival.
   b. Turmeric-powder (for blessing) (*bhandarprasad*) is to be taken next to the headman.
   c. Frankincense is to be received once the month next to the headman on Sundays of the seventh month (*ashvin* of the Hindu calendar).
   d. On the full moon festival of the seventh month sweets should be received at half the amount taken by the headman.

Total six items

Rights for Astrologership

4. The *baluta*-remuneration of the amount equal to that for shrine-keeper.
5. Share of the offerings to the shrine equal to that taken by (other) *baluta*-servants.
6. *Inam* land of 25 *bighas* (about 8 hectares) (with the pro-

duce) of 12.5 *mans* (of grains, probably about 157 kilograms).

Total three items

As shown above there are 13 items of privileges for accountancy. Take a half of them yourselves and give the other half to Lakshman Govind. Regarding the shares of the rights for astrologership also take a half and give the other to Lakshman Govind. I have given (sold) to you half the accountancy and astrologership mentioned above. Taking the various emoluments (*manpan, hakk, utpann, vagaire lajime*), live happily and enjoy hereditarily. Also I have given you the right half out of my patrimonial house-site (*mirascha gharthana*) and the left half to Lakshman Govind. If anyone of my relations or I raise an objection to this matter my ancestors will bring a curse upon us. I have written and handed this sales-deed over to you.

In this way (you) have brought and shown the sales-deed, the certificate attested by local assembly (*mahajar gotache sakshinishin*) and the certificate of the Peshwa. It has been clearly established by taking them into consideration that you have bought a half accountancy and a half astrologership of the above village along with customary remunerations and house from Hmalsabai, widow of Malhar Raghunath Atre, for Rs 2,000. Accordingly His Majesty (*swami*), granting his favour on you, has conferred upon you and your descendants, generation after generation, a half accountancy *watan* and a half astrologership *watan* of the above village along with house, payment for accountancy, *inam*, customary remunerations (*hakk lajime kanukayade*), seniority and turban from the government, in accordance with the sales-deed, and granted this *watan* certificate. Holding the above *watans* yourselves perform the service of the *watans*, enjoy the *watans* for yourselves and your descendants, and live happily. A tribute of Rs 500 is imposed upon you in two instalments in connection with the *watans*. Pay it and live happily.[77]

Three points may be explained regarding this record. First, the term *vadilpana* appears several times. This is the antonym of *dhaktepana*; it means ancestors, father, elder brothers, and seniors in general and may be properly translated into 'seniority'. Similarly *dhaktepana* means 'juniority'. These two terms were (are even now) often used in Marathi in connection with division of family or patrimonial properties; the holder of seniority had social (but not always economic) privileges of occupying a superior seat in a meeting, stamping the occupational seal upon documents, and having priority in receiving the emoluments and gifts, for instance. In the above record, the Chandrachuds, who bought a half of the *watans*, held the seniority, and Lakshman Govind who was offered the other half of the *watans*, had juniority. Second, as mentioned before, there are differences of opinion among modern scholars as to whether village-accountant was included in the *baluta*-servants. In this record , since among the 13 items of privileges for accountancy *baluta*-remuneration is not included, the accountant was not considered to be a *baluta*-servant. But as astrologer he was a *baluta*-servant. The third point is about caste. Castes such as water-carriers, betel-leaves-sellers and gardeners appear in this record. As mentioned before, they belonged to a category called twelve *alutas* in modern works; they are different from *baluta*-servants. But the *alutas* will not be discussed here as mentioned before.

At least four important points with regard to the division of *baluta-watans* emerge from the above record.

First, the division of astrologer's *watan* into two did not mean the emergence of two *watans* of astrologership, but only two half *watans*; the *watan* of astrologership of the village remained one after the division as before. This indicates that the *baluta*-servants were not employed by individual families directly; they were to serve the entire village as one territorial unity.

Second, the object of division was not the 'service-sphere' but the 'emolument', comprising house or house-site, *inam* land, and various remunerations in kind and cash. Regarding the two families of astrologers shown in this record, they were

expected to divide the house or the house-site as well as the *inam* land into two equal shares, and then the 'senior family' was to receive all the remunerations in kind and cash and give a half of everything that was thus received to the 'junior family'; but nothing is mentioned to the effect that the two families would divide the village or the sphere of service into two parts, according to the number of families in villagers. This shows that the two families were simultaneously engaged in the work of astrology for the entire village.

Incidentally, not astrology but some other official services, such as village-accountancy, may have faced some technical inconvenience if more than one accountant existed in a village and were engaged simultaneously in the same profession. What arrangement was made in such a case is not shown in our record. But from some other record pertaining to Village Diya of Saswad region, it appears that when the accountancy was divided among a kinship group into two, the following arrangement was made: 'you (the senior branch) are expected to "eat" the accountancy for three years, and we (the junior branch) for three years. But during the five years out of the (first) six years, your (senior) three families should do the accountancy for three years, and we (junior branch) for two years in consideration of the (common) debt repaid (by the senior families).'[78] Whether the village-accountant was included or not among the *baluta*-servants, it is clear here that the service-sphere for accountancy was not divided but the service rotated between them.

At any rate, on the basis of the above evidences it may be generally said that division of *baluta-watan* was not a division of service-sphere but a division of emoluments. In other words, repeated division of a *watan* did not lead to the transformation of a *baluta*-servant from 'the servant of the village' to 'the servant of certain specific families'.

Thirdly, division of a *baluta-watan* into two parts did not mean that the total amount of emolument doubled; the amount of emolument for the whole *watan* remained the same as before. That is, the burden on the villagers as a whole, especially the burden on the peasants as a whole did not change due to the

division. It may therefore be said that increase in the number of shares in a *watan* caused by its division or partial transfer was not in itself a serious concern for the villagers. Therefore, the division, transfer or sale of a *watan* could be carried out without any 'permission' or 'consent' of the villagers as a whole, but merely with the voluntary will of the *watan*-holder. In other words, the main reason for the *baluta-watan* having the village as its service-sphere on the one hand, and yet being considered to be the 'patrimony' of its holders who were able to dispose of it as they (or he) desired on the other, was presumably because the change did not involve any extra burden on the villagers.

And fourthly, although the division, transfer or sale of a *baluta-watan* could be carried out as desired by its holder and did not require the 'permission' or 'consent' of the village as a whole, it did not mean that the village as a group was in no way concerned with the transactions of *baluta-watan*. It may be said, as shown in the above record, that for such a transaction to be effective the 'confirmation by local assembly' (*gotache sakshi*) and 'the certificate of the local assembly' (*gotache mahajar*) were required.

Now we may summarize our findings on the 'twelve *baluta*-servants' of the eighteenth century Maharashtrian village as follows:

Firstly, there were *baluta*-servants who held their occupation as *watan* or patrimony and those who were merely strangers employed on temporary basis. In other words, it would not be correct to assume that all village-servants held hereditary monopoly over their respective jobs in the village. Those who held hereditary monopoly over some kinds of service sometimes transferred or sold their rights on these or left their sphere of service when necessary, and there were also others, the 'migratory servants' so to speak, who were on the look out for a vacancy in the *watan* system and whenever there was one would fill it up provisionally.

Secondly, whether *watan*-holders or not, *baluta*-servants were conceived of as 'the servants of the village'. In other words, the village as a territorial whole was thought to be their sphere

of service, and they offered their respective service to individual villagers, especially to individual peasants belonging to this territorial community.

Thirdly, emoluments for the *baluta*-servants were paid by the *peasants* in kind or in cash at the harvest time, and this was enjoyed both by the *watan*-holding servants and the *watan*-less ones, so long as they worked for the village. In addition to this, the *watan*-holders were entitled to many 'perquisites' on various occasions and under various pretexts, and the villagers, including the peasants, had to bear this burden also. It is not clear if the *watan*-less servants were also entitled to these 'perquisites', presumably they were. Some *baluta*-servants were granted small plots of *inam* land by the village or by the government. These were enjoyed hereditarily, and so only the *watan*-holding servants are presumed to have had this privilege.

And fourthly, there was one *baluta-watan* for every occupation in a village. Division of a *watan* did not increase its number; each sharer of the divided *watan* was considered to have a fraction of it. Moreover, what was divided was not the sphere of service but the emoluments from the *watan*. Therefore, in the process of division of a *watan* the related *baluta*-servants were not transformed from being 'the servants of the village' to becoming 'the servants of certain specific families'. If they turned to be 'the servants of families' in later period, as suggested by some recent sociological works in various parts of India, they did so, presumably, not because of any logical necessity inherent in the *baluta* system, but because of changes in and decay of the village system as a whole.

This is only a tentative summary based on the examination of a limited number of evidences and subject to modification whenever any new evidences, which are in conflict with this view, are discovered.

Not all servants who worked in the eighteenth century Maharashtrian village were either *baluta*-or the so-called *aluta*-servants. For instance, there were the priests (*upadhyay*), who were in a different category. Many of them seem to have served certain specific families and been supported by them. We shall

now turn our attention to such servants.

III. SERVANTS EMPLOYED BY FAMILIES— ESPECIALLY THE PRIESTS

In the Marathi records we sometimes come across the term *gramopadhyay* (priest of the village).[79] It would appear from this that priests were employed by the village as a whole. But we do not quite know how they functioned in the village.

Generally speaking, routine ceremonies performed in connection with the sacred thread, marriage, ancestors, and so on in Hindu society have essentially been family affairs accompanied by elaborate rituals and *mantras*, differing somewhat in accordance with the family-god (*kulaswami*), caste and religious sect of the people concerned. Religious events, not directly concerned with the life-cycle of the Hindus, such as seasonal festivals, and festivities of the tutelary god or goddess of the village and other Hindu divinities, seem to have been usually performed at the village-shrine as collective activities; yet rites of the life-cycle were performed at home with the participation of officiating priests as well as close kinship group.[80]

The priests, specialists in such rites, were usually Brahmins by caste. Exception should be mentioned, however, in this regard: as the priest was as a rule invited at home and officiated at the rites, he could not do this at the home of any untouchable castes such as *mahars*, leather-workers, rope-makers, and so on. He could officiate at the rites only at the homes of 'clean castes' (*shuddh jati*). Among the untouchables there were special priests who belonged to some untouchable caste.[81] Excepting for such cases, we may safely assume that priests were Brahmins so far as 'clean castes' were concerned. The Hindu shrine-keepers often referred to in this article were not priests as such but merely managers or attendants of shrines, and they were considered to be Shudras.

At any rate as the rites related to the life-cycle among the Hindus were elaborate family observances which differed according to the caste, sect, family-god, and so on, every priest

who conducted such rites tended usually to serve only some specific families.

So far as I know, there are two records from Saswad region which show that priests were in direct clientele relationship with specific families.

Record No. 1. This record dated 7 February 1746 was written by three land-holding peasants (*thalvai*), surnamed Jadav, of Village Diya of the above region to two Brahmins, surnamed Pansi, accountants and astrologers of the same village. It is translated below:

> (Date in Shaka era, names and occupations of the addressees, names of the addressers, Shuhur year, and Fasli year) Mr Kando Shivdeva Pansi (one of the two addressees) came to us and said: 'Since olden time your priesthood (*tumche upadhepana*) has been ours. Your ancestors used to let our ancestors perform all the rites. Until now you have agreed to our doing so. Recently, however, your steward (*majmudar*) Ragho Anant, telling a lie, has started a dispute with us. We do not understand this. You and we are brothers bound by *watan* (*watandar bhau*). You and we should behave in accordance with the custom set by our ancestors'. Then, we think you are the original priests (*mul upadhe*). We shall let you officiate at all the rites generation after generation as our ancestors used to pay the perquisites (*manpan*) for priesthood to your ancestors. Steward Ragho Anant has nothing to dispute with you. Ragho Anant works (*karbhar*) with us in his own way (? *yekhatyarine*); therefore we did not know (about his dispute). If hereafter you have any adverse time (*kalkala*) when (we) have granted a document (of priesthood to him) or appoint (him) to priesthood from our carelessness, (we shall) remove him. Ragho Anant, his relatives or any others have no reason whatsoever to trouble your priesthood at our family (*ghar*) or at the family (*ghar*) of our kinship group (*bhauband*). You and your kinship group of the Pansis, down to your descendants, should enjoy the priesthood of our family (*amche gharche upadhepana*), worshipping gods

(*deva devatarchan*), spiritual guidance (*achyaryatvan*), rite of offering (*dandharmash*), sacrifice for fire and god (*have-kave*), marriage (*lagna*), re-marriage (*muhurta*) and other perquisites (*manpan*) with complete peace of mind, and perform the priesthood hereditarily, free of all care. If we deviate from this arrangement with you, curse of our family-god will be on us and our kinship group. Please carry on the profession of your priesthood (*aple upadhepanachi birt*) with contented mind both in home country (*shvadesi*) and foreign country (*videsi*).[82]

Record No. 2. This record is also from Saswad region, but its first half is unfortunately lost. At the end of the record there are two lines: 'This statement is written and submitted. By the hand of Mahadaji Balal Gokhale, revenue-farmer and accountant of the above village,' and, 'Such are written in the seven items above. Signed by Narashinbhat Bapat dated the 10th day of the second half of the 4th month in the year 1696 in Shaka era, the year called *jaya* (A.D. 1 August 1774).'[83] The name of the 'above village' as well as the first two of the 'seven items above' are, however, not shown, for the first half of the record is lost.

At any rate it appears that a Brahmin named Narashinbhat Bapat had this record written by Mahadaji Balal Gokhale. It was submitted by the former to some local assembly when a dispute started over a priesthood in a village between him and another Brahmin surnamed Paranjapye. Of the five items shown in the existing record only the significant parts are translated as follows:

1. When Brahmin clients belonging to Apastanbha or Rigvedi sect (*apastanbha athva rugvedi yejman*) perform the great rite (*maha anushthan*) at the shrine dedicated to god Vishveshvar (an incarnate of Shiva), the guidance (*acharya-pana*) and putting the fire on the altar (*kundmandap*) are ours (Bapat's).
2. At the families of Rigvedi Brahmins, the second pitcher (? *dusra kalash*) as well as the *brahmatva* (?) are ours and

the priesthood (*upadhepana*) is Paranjapye's.

3. There is no dispute between us and Paranjapye regarding the priesthood for Brahmins. Both the parties are carrying on as before (the rest omitted).
4. Dispute has been going on for the last several years with regard to the priesthood for peasants (*kunbi*) (the rest omitted).
5. Our ancestors have been carrying on the priesthood of the families of peasant and other castes of the above village (*mauje majkurche kunbi vagaire khum yache gharche upadhyepana*), and Paranjapye is carrying on (the priesthood of) some (other families). While this was the case, Balanbhat Paranjape, father of Lakshmanbhat Paranjape, gave some (money) to the shrine-keeper (*gurao*), Maratha by caste, and several peasants (*kunbi*) of the village, collected them near the shrine dedicated to a goddess, and formed a party (*kat*) by saying, 'Let us expel such peasants (*kunbi*), (the last two letters *bi* and following several words lost)... who support the priest (Bapat) from their caste,' and putting five coconuts on five places[84] (the rest omitted).

Three points should particularly be noted in the above record. First, the term *yejman* appears in the sense of clients *vis-à-vis* a Brahmin priest: the proto-type of the so-called *jajmani* system.

Second, although Priest Bapat conducted the guidance and one more function at the 'great rite' performed by Brahmin clients at the shrine as well as some specific functions at the ceremonies instituted at some Brahmin families, the priesthood as such at the rites of Brahmin families was performed by another priest surnamed Paranjapye. Bapat's priesthood was limited to the families of 'peasant and other castes', who may be collectively called 'clean Shudras'. This indicates that the principle which delimited the service-sphere for a priest was not the territorial principle like a village but pseudo-consanguinity of caste as an endogamous group. It is mentioned that the 'peasant and other castes' Bapat served were of 'the above village'; but as regards the Brahmins Paranjapye served there is no mention of

where they lived. This fact seems to suggest that the sphere of service for a priest was determined not by territorial but by pseudo-consanguineous principle. Moreover, it is not clear either whether Bapat and Paranjapye lived in 'the above village'. As the first part of the record is lost we cannot say anything definitely; yet it is quite possible that they or at least one of them lived in some other village or town not very far from 'the above village'. At any rate, it bears repeating that the sphere of service for a family priest tended to be confined to certain specific caste (or castes).

And thirdly, Paranjapye had been the priest of some Brahmin families since 'before', and Bapat was likewise the family priest of 'peasant and other castes' since 'ancestors'. This means that both held their priesthood hereditarily. This record does not, however, clarify whether their *hereditary* service-sphere was confined to certain caste (or castes) or to certain specific families belonging to such caste (or castes). This point is important when we remember that there were broadly two classes among the peasants as among the rural servants: the land-holding peasants (*mirasdars*, *thalkaris* or *thalvais*) and the temporary peasants (*uparis*); the *watan*-holding servants (*watandar balute*) and the temporary servants (*upari balute*). In other words, families of land-holding peasants as well as *watan*-holding rural servants could employ a priest on permanent basis (that is, hereditarily), as is clearly shown in the Record No. 1 above, unless they disposed of their family property entirely and left the village for ever. But the temporary peasants and servants could not do so in principle however long they may have lived in the same village. They could employ a priest suitable for their caste (or castes) on *ad hoc* basis. Accordingly the 'peasant and other castes' in the fifth item of Record No. 2 may be taken to have included both permanent and temporary clients for Bapat.

IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Our tentative findings may now be summarized:

First, the servants in the eighteenth century Maharashtrian village, categorized as 'twelve *baluta*-servants', served and

were maintained by the village as a territorial whole. In this sense the old theory or the demiurgic theory, as we said at the beginning of this article, rather than the new or *jajmani* theory was the correct one. But there were two classes of *baluta*-servants: those who held their sphere of service and the accompanying emoluments as their *watan* or patrimony and those who did not have such a *watan* and worked in a village for a temporary period (namely the *uparis*).

And secondly, there were priests (*upadhyay*) who did not hold any *watan*. They were Brahmins. In addition to being priests, they often worked as village-accountants and (or) astrologers. The service-sphere of a priest was determined not by the territorial principle but by pseudo-consanguineous principle. That is, his service-sphere tended to be limited to certain caste (or castes). This was, presumably, due to the fact that the routine rites among the Hindus varied much from caste to caste. Moreover, the life-cycle ceremonies among the Hindus were essentially family rites performed within the family, so a priest conducting such rites tended to serve specific families of certain caste (or castes). Such families (*yejman*) were, however, either permanent or temporary clients of the priest in accordance with their economic status.

In short the new (*jajmani*) theory, as propounded by the recent sociologists on rural India, is acceptable for the family priesthood, but not for the twelve *baluta*-servants of the eighteenth century Maharashtra. At the same time, however, there is hardly any doubt that in many parts of modern India a good percentage of rural servants were until recently (or are even now to a great extent) served under the mode of employment that may be called *jajmani*. This view is amply supported by a number of modern sociological works. This may be taken to indicate that during the British period the territorial social group called village was greatly disorganized, or even disintegrated as a result of which village-servants were transformed into family-servants. But unfortunately for us, sociological surveys on modern rural Maharashtra are so scarce that we are unable at present to compare our findings with the modern state of affairs. It is interesting to note that H. H. Mann thought that even in the

1910s the *baluta*-servants in the two Maharashtrian villages he studied were essentially 'servants of the village'.[85]

NOTES

1. Karl Marx, *Capital, A Critique of Political Economy*, transl. from the third German edition, by Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling, revised ed., vol. 1, Chicago, 1915, pp. 392–3.
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5. Max Weber, *Abriss der universalen sozial-und Wirtschafts-Geschichte*, Munchen und Leipzig, 1924, S. 37; *General Economic History*, transl. by Frank H. Knight, First Collier Book Edition, New York, 1961, pp. 34–5.
6. Max Weber, a.a.o., SS. 110–11; English transl., p. 97.
7. Max Weber, a.a.o., SS. 37, 148; English transl. pp. 128, 271 (note 5).
8. S. N. Sen, *Administrative System of the Marathas*, 2nd ed., Calcutta, 1925, p. 233.
9. Ibid., p. 521.
10. Ibid., p. 235.
11. A. S. Altekar, *A History of Village Communities in Western India*, Oxford University Press, 1927, pp. 89–90.
12. Ibid., pp. 95–6.
13. W. H. Wiser, *The Hindu Jajmani System*, Lucknow, 1st pr., 1936; 2nd pr., 1958, p. VII.
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15. Ibid., p. XVII.
16. Ibid., p. XVIII.
17. Ibid., p. XXI.
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20. Ibid., p. 3.
21. W. H. Wiser, op. cit., p. xi (Foreword by Oscar Lewis).
22. For instance, Oscar Lewis, *Village Life in Northern India, Studies in a Delhi Village*, University of Illinois Press, 1958, ch. ii, 'Caste and Jajmani System'. N. S. Reddy, 'Functional Relations of Lohars in a North Indian Village' in D. N. Majumdar (ed.), *Rural Profiles*, Lucknow, 1955, pp. 1–12. M. N. Srinivas, 'The Social System of a Mysore Village' in McKim Marriot (ed.), *Village India*, The University of Chicago Press, 1955, p. 15.
23. M. N. Srinivas, op. cit., p. 15.
24. Ct. S. C. Dube, *Indian Village*, London, 1955, p. 59. 'In this respect he [carpenter] would not make an exception even in the case of established cultivator to whose households his family may have been attached for *several years, even for decades.*' (Matter within brackets and italics present author's.)
25. M. N. Srinivas, op. cit., p. 10.
26. Oscar Lewis, op. cit., p. 74.
27. David F. Pocock, 'Notes on Jajmani Relationships', *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, no. vi, December 1962, pp. 79ff.
28. H. H. Wilson, *A Glossary of Judicial and Revenue Terms . . . of British India*, 2nd ed., Calcutta, 1940, p. 83. J. Grant-Dutt, *A History of the Mahrattas*, vol. i, Calcutta, 1912, p. 24, footnote.
29. R. V. Oturkar (ed.), *Peshvekalin Samajik va Arthik Patravyavahar*, Poona, 1950, no. 75 (Abbreviated as Oturkar in the following footnotes).
30. J. Grant-Duff, op. cit., p. 25, footnote.
31. H. H. Wilson, op. cit., pp. 29–30.
32. J. T. Molesworth, *Dictionary, Marathi and English*, 2nd ed., Bombay, 1857, p. 46.
33. H. H. Wilson, op. cit., p. 30 (left).
34. G. C. Vad (prep.), *Selections from the Satara Raja's and the Peshwa's Diaries*, published by the Deccan Vernacular Translation Society, Poona, with the permission of the Government of Bombay, 9 vols., Poona, 1906–11 (abbreviated as *SSRPD*), vol. vii, no. 532. Oturkar, no. 37.
35. R. V. Oturkar, 'Some Aspects of Social Life under Maratha Rule', *Historical and Economic Studies*, Fergusson College, Poona, 1943, p. 26.
36. H. H. Wilson, op. cit., p. 853 (*upari*).

37. *SSRPD*, vol. VII, no. 546, pp. 151–63, especially pp. 159–62.
38. Ibid., vol. VII, no. 532, pp. 134–5 (left).
39. Ibid., pp. 134–5 (right).
40. Ibid., pp. 136–8 (left). '*ganvache patil vagaire karbhari yannin Mauje Kalanb Tarf Mahalunge yethen Satva Lohar upari rahat hota, tyas anun loharkichen kam chalten, tyajvar varshen dohovarshen Kilijkhanachi dhamdum jahali tevhanpasun loharkichen kamkaj toch karito va baluten gheto. ganvant kothen kagad patrahi jahalen, tyanjvarhi tyanen sakshi lohar mhanon ghatlya, parantu ha lohar vatandar nahin. yacha aja panja ganvavar nandla nahin va yas vatandar mhanon ganvavar anita nahin.*'
41. Ibid., pp. 136–7 (right).
42. Ibid., p. 138.
43. Ibid., pp. 138–9.
44. V. K. Rajvade (ed.), *Marathyancha Itihasachin Sadhanen*, vol. 14, Poona, 1918, no. 1. '*aple ganvin puratan vatandar kulkarni navta upari yeunu kam chalvit hota.*' This record is of the year 1681.
45. *SSRPD*, vol. II, no. 16. '*aple ajas ganvachen kamkaj chalavavyas thevilen hoten; tyapasun apna chalviton parantu aplen vatan navhe.*'
46. Ibid., vol. VII, no. 546, pp. 151–7, 159–62.
47. Ibid., p. 160 (right). '*Shidu Sonar Vadegavhanihun ala. tyans ganvakari samastannin ganvache kamas thevila.*'
48. Ibid., p. 159 (left).
49. Ibid., p. 160 (left).
50. Ibid., p. 160 (left). '*amche ganvachehi sonarkichen kamkaj karavyasi lagle.*'
51. Ibid., p. 159 (left). '*ganvachi sonarkichen vatan kamkaj.*'
52. Ibid., vol. VII, no. 532, pp. 133, 134 (left), 139.
53. Ibid., p. 134 (left).
54. Ibid., p. 135.
55. Ibid., pp. 135–6.
56. Ibid., p. 136.
57. Oturkar, no. 37.
58. *SSRPD*, vol. II, no. 16.
59. Oturkar, no. 46. '*Mahar badhale kholecha baramahi ashtoprahara rabta asava.*' '*Varkad Mahar astil tyas patilache hukumapramanen ubhi pandharichi chakri karavi.*'
60. Oturkar, no. 77 (nakal). '*tevha pandharikade Mag firyad gela*

tyavarun padharine majla bolaun sagitle.'

61. See ch. 7 of this book.
62. *SSRPD*, vol. VII, no. 532, p. 134 (left). '*darmyan Darkojicha chulta Kashi Sutar loharki karit hota. te veles Sabaji Kuchila Mauje majkur yannin Kashi javal apli kurhad ghadavyasi dili hoti te tyajpasun gahal jahli. . . .*'
63. Ibid., p. 134 (left). '*tyavar ek don velan tyache samajavisis ganvakari ale parantu apli abru geli hmanon to ganvavar gela nahin. mag ganvakari yannin. . . .*'
64. Ibid., vol. VII, no. 532. '*tevhapasun loharkiche kamkaj toj karito va baluten gheto . . . parantu ha lohar vatandar nahin. . . .*'
65. Ibid.
66. Oturkar, no. 75. '*paiki vaja mahar vatanavar chakris nahint sabab rupye* 10 *baki rupye* 60.'
67. *SSRPD*, vol. VI, no. 710. '*peshjin Moglai amalant ganvachi batai hot hoti, tevhan sare ganvacha mal ekjagen jama houn, autakyache haten malachi mojni houn, baluten pavat hoten.*'
68. Oturkar, no. 90. '*balute josi yache denen te kul pahun set pahun pikasarikhe det alon tehi ghet ale. . . .*'
69. Oturkar, no. 75.
70. *SSRPD*, vol. I, no. 283, p. 137.
71. J. T. Molesworth, *Dictionary, Marathi and English*, 2nd ed., Bombay, 1857, p. 565 (*bayate*).
72. Oturkar, no. 46.
73. Ibid., no. 70.
74. *SSRPD*, vol. VI, no. 816.
75. See ch. 7 of this book.
76. *SSRPD*, vol. VII, no. 546, p. 156 (right).
77. *SSRPD*, vol. I, no. 283.
78. Oturkar, no. 48. '*tin varshe tumhi kulkarna khàve tin varshe amhi khave tyasi sa varsachi pach varshe varsli kharchvechamule tharvalyapaiki tin varshe tumhi tigharani kulkarna karave va don varshe amhi karavi.*'
79. For instance, *SSRPD*, vol. V, no. 206.
80. See P. N. Prabhu, *Hindu Social Organization*, new rev. ed., Bombay, 1954, ch. VI, 'The Family'.
81. See ch. 4 of this book.
82. Oturkar, no. 49.
83. Ibid., no. 66, p. 47.

84. Ibid., p. 46.
85. H. H. Mann, *Land and Labour in a Deccan Village*, Oxford University Press, 1917, pp. 132–3; Mann, *Land and Labour in a Deccan Village*, Study no. 2, Oxford University Press, 1921, pp. 122–3.

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